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MADAME DE STAËL

AND

MADAME ROLAND.

MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DE STAËL,

AND OF

MADAME ROLAND.

BY

L. MARIA CHILD,

AUTHOR OF 'PHILOTHEA,' 'THE MOTHER'S BOOK,' 'BIOGRAPHIES OF GOOD WIVES,' 'FACT AND FICTION,' 'LETTERS FROM N. YORK,' ETC.

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This Volume

IS

RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY

INSCRIBED, BY

THE EDITOR

MADAME DE STAËL.

Il me semble voir en elle une de ces belles Grecques, qui enchantaient et subjugaient le monde. Elle a plus de talents encore que d'amour propre ; mais des talents si rares doivent nécessairement exciter le désir de les développer ; et je ne sais pas quel théâtre peut suffire à cetre activité d'imagination, à caractére ardent enfin qui se fait sentir dans toutes ses paroles. *Corinne.*

In a gallery of celebrated women, the first place unquestionably belongs to Anne Maria Louise Germaine Necker, Baroness de Staël Holstein.

She was the only child of James Necker, the famous financier, (a long time the popular idol in France), and of Susanna Curchod, the daughter of a poor Swiss clergyman, who in the sequestered village of Crassy bestowed upon her as thorough an education as fell to the lot of any woman in Europe.

Gibbon, the historian, visited the father of Mademoiselle Curchod, and became a captive to her charms. He tells the story in his own Memoirs, where he informs us, that 'she was learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment, and elegant in manners : her wit and beauty were the theme of universal applause.'

Gibbon prospered in his suit; but such an obscure connexion was not agreeable to his father, who threatened to disinherit him if he persisted in it. He obeyed the parental command, like a dutiful son and a very philosophical lover; and the young lady, on her part, seems to have borne the separation with becoming resignation and cheerfulness.

After her father's death, Mademoiselle Curchod taught a school in Geneva; where she became acquainted with M. Necker, the gentleman whom she afterwards married. He was a native of Geneva, and at that time a banker in Paris. The large fortune, which he afterwards acquired, had its origin in the following circumstances. The Old East India Company, consisting principally of nobility, were ignorant of business, and trusted everything to the abilities and discretion of M. Necker. By loaning them money at the enormous interest they had been accustomed to pay, and by forming a lottery to relieve them from embarrassment, he obtained at once more than seventy thousand pounds; and with this capital he became one of the wealthiest bankers in Europe.

Thus Madame Necker, united to a man of uncommon talent and eloquence, herself rich in intelligence and learning, and surrounded by all the facilities of affluence, passed at once from the monotonous seclusion of her early life to a situation as dazzling as it was distinguished.

Their house was a favorite gathering-place for the fashionable and philosophical *coteries* of Paris, and foreigners of note always made it a point to be presented to Madame Necker.

It has been said that her husband's rise as a politician was greatly owing to her literary assemblies, which never failed to draw around them all the talented and influential men of the day. She wrote a book of Miscellanies, that obtained considerable reputation, especially in Germany. But all the honors paid to Monsieur and Madame Necker, however flattering at the time, were completely eclipsed in the glorious distinction of being the parents of Madame de Staël.

This extraordinary being was born in Paris, in 1766. In her infancy, she was noticed for a remarkable degree of brightness, gayety, and freedom. M. de Bonstetten (the correspondent of Gray the poet) tells the following anecdote of her when five or six years old. Being on a visit to his friend, M. Necker, then residing at Coppet, his country-seat, about two leagues from Geneva, he was one day walking through the grounds, when he was suddenly struck with a switch, from behind a tree; turning round, he observed the little rogue laughing. She called out, 'Mamma wishes me to learn to use my left hand, and so I am trying.' Simond says, 'She stood in great awe of her mother, but was very familiar with her father, of whom she was dotingly fond. One day, after dinner, as Madame Necker rose first and left the room, the little girl, till then on good behaviour, all at once seizing her napkin, threw it across the table, in a fit of mad spirits, at her father's head; then ran round to him, and hanging about his neck, allowed him no time for reproof.

The caresses of her father, contrary to the more rigid views of Madame Necker, constantly encouraged her

childish prattle ; and the approbation she obtained perpetually excited her to new efforts : even then, she replied to the continual pleasantries of her father with that mixture of vivacity and tenderness, which afterward so delightfully characterized her intercourse with him. Madame Necker de Saussure, her relation and intimate friend, speaking of her early maturity, says, ' It seems as if Madame de Staël had always been young, and never been a child. I have heard of only one trait, which bore the stamp of childhood ; and even in this there is an indication of talent. When a very little girl, she used to amuse herself by cutting paper kings and queens, and making them play a tragedy ; her mother, being very rigid in her religious opinions, forbade a play which might foster a love of the theatre ; and Marie would often hide herself to pursue her favorite occupation at leisure. Perhaps in this way she acquired the only peculiar habit she ever had, that of twisting a bit of paper, or a leaf, between her fingers.'

Through her whole life, the idea of giving pleasure to her parents was a very strong motive with her. She gave a singular proof of this at ten years of age. Seeing how much they both admired Mr. Gibbon, the early lover, and afterward the cordial friend of Madame Necker, she imagined it was her duty to marry him, in order that they might constantly enjoy his agreeable conversation ; and she seriously proposed it to her mother. Those who have seen a full-length profile of the corpulent historian will readily believe the child's imagination was not captivated with his figure.

Madame Necker being anxious that her daughter should have a companion of her own age, invited Mad-

emoiselle Huber, afterwards Madame Rilliet; the choice was decided by the intimacy of the families, and by the careful education of Mademoiselle Huber. This lady has written an account of their first interview, which will give an idea of the manners and habits of Mademoiselle Necker at eleven years old. At that time her father had just been appointed Comptroller General of the Finance of France. The friend of her youth, describing their introduction to each other, says, 'She talked to me with a warmth and facility, which was already eloquence, and which made a great impression upon me. We did not play like children. She immediately asked me about my lesson, whether I knew any foreign languages, and if I often went to the theatre. When I told her I had never been but three or four times, she exclaimed — and promised that we should often go together; adding, that, when we returned, we would, according to her usual habit, write down the subject of the dramas, and what had particularly struck us. She likewise proposed that we should write together every morning.

'We entered the parlor. By the side of Madame Necker's chair was a footstool, on which her daughter seated herself, being obliged to sit very upright. She had hardly taken her accustomed place, when two or three elderly persons gathered round her, and began to talk to her with the most affectionate interest. The Abbé Raynal held her hand in his a long time, and conversed with her as if she had been twentyfive years of age. The others around her were MM. Thomas, Marmontel, the Marquis de Pesay, and the Baron de Grimm. At table, how she listened! She did not open

her mouth, yet she seemed to talk in her turn, so much was spoken in the changing expression of her features. Her eyes followed the looks and movements of those who conversed, and one would have judged that she even anticipated their ideas. On every subject she seemed at home ; even in politics, which at that period excited very great interest. After dinner, numerous visiters arrived. Every one, as they came up to Madame Necker, spoke to her daughter, indulging in some slight compliment, or pleasantry. She replied to every thing with ease and gracefulness : they loved to amuse themselves by attacking her, and trying to embarrass her, in order to excite that little imagination, which already began to show its brilliancy. Men, the most distinguished for intellect, were those who particularly attached themselves to her. They asked her to give an account of what she had been reading, talked of the news, and gave her a taste for study by conversing about that which she had learned, or that of which she was ignorant.

In consequence of Madame Necker's system of education, her daughter, at the same time that she pursued a course of severe study, was constantly accustomed to conversation beyond her years. The world must have somewhat softened the severity of Madame Necker's opinions ; for we find that she often allowed her daughter to assist at the representation of the best dramatic pieces. Her pleasures, as well as her duties, were exercises of intellect ; and nature, which had originally bestowed great gifts, was assisted by every possible method. In this way, her vigorous faculties acquired a prodigious growth.

At this period of her life, we find the following account of her in the Memoir of Baron de Grimm.

'While M. Necker passes decrees which cover him with glory, and will render his administration eternally dear to France; while Madame Necker renounces all the sweets of society to devote herself to the establishment of a Hospital of Charity, in the parish of St. Sulpicius, their daughter, a girl of twelve years old, who already evinces talents above her age, amuses herself with writing little comedies, after the manner of the semi-dramas of M. de St. Mark. She has just completed one, in two acts, entitled the "Inconveniences of the life led at Paris," which is not only astonishing for her age, but appears even very superior to her models. It represents a mother who had two daughters, one brought up in all the simplicity of rural life, and the other amid the grand airs of the capital. The latter is the favorite, from the talents and graces she displays; but this mother, falling into misfortunes, from the loss of a lawsuit, soon learns which of the two is in reality most deserving of her affection. The scenes of this little drama are well connected together, the characters are well supported, and the development of the intrigue is natural and full of interest. M. Marmontel, who saw it performed in the drawing-room at St. Ouen, the country-house of M. Necker, by the author and some of her young companions, was affected by it even to tears.'

In 1781, when her father published his *Compte Rendu*, Mademoiselle Necker wrote him a very remarkable anonymous letter, which he immediately recognised by the style.

From her earliest youth, she evinced a decided taste for composition. Her first attempts were portraits and eulogiums, a style of writing which was then extremely popular in France, under the influence of Thomas, the friend of Madame Necker. At the age of fifteen, she made extracts from the *Spirit of the Laws*; accompanied by her own reflections; and at that time the the Abbé Raynal wished her to furnish, for his great work, an article on the *Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*.

Her father was naturally averse to female authors, and nothing but her very decided excellence could have induced him to pardon her love of writing.

The sensibilities of her heart seem to have been as early and as fully developed, as the energies of her mind. In 1781 her father removed from office, amid the universal lamentations of the people, and retired to his residence in Switzerland. Paul of Russia and his princess were then travelling through Europe, under the title of Count and Countess du Nord. The royal pair visited M. Necker, at Coppet, and expressed their respect and esteem in terms so flattering, that Mademoiselle Necker burst into tears.

The same warmth and susceptibility of character was shown in her ardent attachment for Mademoiselle Huber; and indeed we find proofs of it at every period of her life.

The deep feeling and sombre richness, spread over all her writings, was early manifested in her literary taste: 'That which interested her,' says Madame Rilliet, 'was always that which made her weep.'

The health of Mademoiselle Necker could not endure the high pressure of excitement so constantly applied to her intellectual faculties. Before she was fifteen years old, the physicians were obliged to order complete seclusion, and total abandonment of study. This was a subject of great regret to Madame Necker. She had indulged an unbounded ambition for her daughter; and, according to her ideas, to give up great learning was to renounce all hopes of distinction. Having obtained extensive erudition by her own patient habits of mental labor, she thought every body could study as intensely and methodically as she had done. 'With her, every thing was a study. She studied society, individuals, the art of writing, the art of talking — she even studied herself: all was reduced to a system, and details were elevated to great importance.'

Her feelings, as well as her mind, were kept in rigid subjection to propriety and method; and, having obtained much by effort, she exacted much from others. Her husband once said of her, 'Madame Necker would be perfectly amiable, if she only had something to forgive in herself.'

Such a character pre-supposes very little facility in varying her plans: when she found her daughter's constitution could not sustain the rigid system she had marked out for her, she gave the work of education entirely into the hands of her husband.

The freedom of spirit thus granted to Mademoiselle Necker was probably the reason her genius afterward took so bold a flight.

A life all poetry succeeded to her previous habits of study and restraint. Every thing conspired to give

abundant nourishment to her active imagination. She had nothing to do but to run about the woods of St. Ouen, with her young friend Mademoiselle Huber. The two girls, dressed as nymphs, or as muses, declaimed poetry, made verses, and wrote dramas, which they themselves represented.

The power of profiting by her father's leisure was a great advantage to her at this period of her life. She never neglected an opportunity of being with him ; and his conversation was always her highest enjoyment. M. Necker was every day more struck with her wonderful intelligence ; and never did it show itself in such charming forms as when with him. She soon perceived that he had need of relaxation and amusement; and in the gayety of an affectionate heart she tried a thousand ways to make him smile. Her father was never prodigal of his approbation ; his looks were ever more flattering than his words. He found it more necessary, as well as more amusing, to notice her faults than her merits. No incipient imperfection escaped his raillery ; the slightest tendency to pretension, or exaggeration, was promptly checked. In after life, she often used to say, ' I owe the frankness of my manners, and the ingenuousness of my character, entirely to my father's penetration. He used to unmask all my little affectations ; and I acquired the habit of believing that he could see into my inmost heart.'

As might be expected, the extreme vivacity of Mademoiselle Necker was continually betraying her into sins against her mother's ideas of order and decorum. On this subject, she made a thousand good resolutions, but was always sure to forget them the moment she

needed them. She could not restrain her exuberant fancy and overflowing spirits. Her soul was a full, bright stream, forever deluging its banks, and rushing and bubbling over all impediments.

Sometimes, with the intention of being very proper, she would sit demurely behind her father, at a distance from the company, that she might not interrupt conversation; but presently one intelligent man would be withdrawn from the circle, then another, then another, until a noisy group was formed around her: M. Necker smiled, involuntarily, as her lively conversation met his ear, and the original subject of discussion was entirely deranged.

The perfect friendship and boundless sympathy existing between Mademoiselle Necker and her father was not entirely agreeable to Madame Necker: she was slightly jealous of losing the first place in her husband's affections. Had her highly-gifted daughter excelled in such qualities as belonged to her own character, *she* would have been associated with all her attractions, and success would naturally have been attributed to her judicious care; but the fact was, her daughter pleased by qualities exactly opposed to her own, and her success in society originated in a course of education directly contrary to her views.

Mademoiselle Necker's character was, in many points, different from her father's, and decidedly marked by a higher order of genius; but, in the quickness of her perceptions and the promptitude of her wit, she resembled him much more than she did her mother.*

* M. Necker, though no one could have guessed it from his writings, was full of humor, and apt to see things in a ludicrous point

We must therefore forgive the workings of human nature in Madame Necker, if she could not always conceal her impatience when she saw her husband give himself up so unreservedly to the enjoyment of a mind alike without a model, or an equal. When Madame Saussure expressed surprise at the prodigious distinction of Mademoiselle Necker, her mother replied, 'It is nothing, absolutely nothing at all, to what I would have made her.'

Through her whole life, Madame de Staël was characterized by candor and amiability; and these qualities never showed themselves more plainly than when reproved by her mother. Perhaps she gave too open and decided a preference to her more indulgent parent; but she always cherished a profound veneration for Madame Necker. Though she had, from her earliest childhood, indulged in habits of quick and lively repartee, she was never known, in her most careless moments, to speak a disrespectful word of her mother.

Madame Necker had two different kinds of influence upon the character and destiny of her illustrious daughter, both of which tended to produce the same remarkable result.

She transmitted to her ardent affections, a strong capacity for deep impressions, great enthusiasm for the grand and beautiful, and an ambition for wit, talent, learning, and all kinds of distinction; but the rigid restraint, she imposed upon her in early life, instead of

of view. He was rather silent, but made sly remarks and sharp repartees. He wrote several witty plays; but, thinking it beneath the dignity of a minister of State to publish them, he burnt them. *Simond.*

inducing her own habits of strict discipline and self-control, produced a violent re-action. Madame Necker thought every thing of detail and method ; and the exaggerated importance she attached to them was probably the reason that her daughter thought nothing of them. In Madame Necker's mind, all was acquired and arranged ; in her daughter's, all was freshness and creation. To one the world was a lesson to be studied ; to the other it was full of theories to be invented. The mother's admiration was exclusively given to habits and principles acquired with care, and maintained with watchfulness ; while the daughter's warmest sympathies were bestowed upon generous impulses, and natural goodness of heart.

In after years, when death had taken from Madame de Staël the friend of her infancy, and when sad experience had somewhat tamed the romance it could not destroy, she appreciated her mother's well-balanced character more highly. ' The more I see of life,' she once said to Madame Saussure, ' the better do I understand my mother ; and the more does my heart feel the need of her.'

Mademoiselle Necker resided at Coppet from 1781 to 1787, when her father was restored to office, and his family accompanied him to Paris.

During her stay in Switzerland, she wrote a sentimental comedy, called ' Sophia, or Secret Sentiments,' founded on a story of ill-directed and unhappy love ; published when she was twenty-one years of age.

Immediately after she came to Paris, she finished her tragedy of Lady Jane Grey, which has had considerable reputation. Soon after, she wrote, but never pub-

lished, another tragedy, called Montmorency, in which the part of Cardinal de Richelieu is said to have been sketched with great spirit. These early productions had prominent defects, as well as beauties. They were marked by that perfect harmony between thought and expression, which always constituted her most delightful peculiarity in conversation or writing; but her friends considered them valuable principally on account of the promise they gave of future greatness. To the world they are objects of curiosity, as the first records in the history of an extraordinary mind.

Her dramas were written in verse; but she never after attempted poetry, except some slight effort for amusement. Her vigorous and rapid mind was a little impatient under the trammels of French versification. In prose she was not compelled to sacrifice originality and freedom; and, in throwing away her fetters, she lost nothing but rhyme, for her soul poured into prose all its wealth of poetry.

Before her twentieth year, she wrote the three Tales, which were not published till 1795, nearly ten years after. She herself attached very little value to these light productions. A treatise on the various forms of fiction, in relation to progressive degrees of civilization, is introduced as a Preface.

Mademoiselle Necker's eloquent and fascinating style of conversation gave a vivid interest to the earliest productions of her pen. No one heard her talk without being eager to read what she had written. The portraits and impromptu sketches, which she made for the amusement of her friends, were handed about in parties, and sought for with avidity: even in these were

discovered her characteristic acuteness of thought, and the harmonious flow of her animated style. Something of the attention paid her at this time may no doubt be attributed to her father's popularity and political influence.

If she had attracted much notice in Switzerland, before her mind had attained the fulness of its majestic stature, it will readily be believed that she excited an unusual sensation when she appeared in the brilliant circles of Paris. Her hands and arms were finely formed, and of a most transparent whiteness. She seldom covered them — confessing, with the child-like frankness which gave such an endearing charm to her powerful character, that she was resolved to make the most of the only personal beauty nature had given her.* True, she had none of the usual pretensions to be called a handsome woman; but there was an intellectual splendor about her face that arrested and rivetted attention. 'No expression was permanent; for her whole soul was in her countenance, and it took the character of every passing emotion. When in perfect repose, her long eye-lashes gave something of heaviness and languor to her usually animated physiognomy; but when excited, her magnificent dark eyes flashed with genius, and seemed to announce her ideas before she could utter them, as lightning precedes the thunder. There

* Her feet are said to have been clumsy. This circumstance gave rise to a pun, which annoyed her a little. On some occasion she represented a statue, the face of which was concealed. A gentleman being asked to guess who the statue was, glanced at the block of marble on which she stood, and answered 'Je vois *le pied de Staël,*' (*le piédestal.*)

was nothing of restlessness in her features; there was even something of indolence; but her vigorous form, her animated gestures, her graceful and strongly marked attitudes, gave a singular degree of directness and energy to her discourse. There was something dramatic about her, even in dress, which, while it was altogether free from ridiculous exaggeration, never failed to convey an idea of something more picturesque than the reigning fashion. When she first entered a room, she walked with a slow and grave step. A slight degree of timidity made it necessary for her to collect her faculties when she was about to attract the notice of a party. This cloud of embarrassment did not at first permit her to distinguish any thing; but her face lighted up in proportion to the friends she recognised.'

'The kindness and generosity of her disposition led her to mark the merits of others strongly on her memory; as she talked, she always seemed to have present to her thoughts the best actions and qualities of each one with whom she conversed. Her compliments partook of the sincerity of the heart from which they came. She praised without flattering. She used to say, "politeness was only the art of *choosing* among our thoughts."'— She possessed this art in an eminent degree. There never was a more shrewd observer of human nature, or one who better knew how to adapt herself to every variety of character. Sir John Sinclair, a celebrated Scotchman, mentions a circumstance which shows the kind of *tact* she possessed. When he visited her father's house, he found her seated at the instrument, singing that plaintive Highland air, so

popular with his countrymen, 'Maybe to return to Lochaber no more.'

The following highly-colored portrait of her, though full of French enthusiasm, can hardly give us an exaggerated idea of the homage she received. It was written by a gentleman, one of her literary friends.

'She is the most celebrated priestess of Apollo; the favorite of the god. The incense she offers is the most agreeable, and her hymns are the most dear. Her words, when she wishes, make the deities descend to adorn his temple, and to mingle among mortals. From the midst of the sacred priestesses, there suddenly advances one — my heart always recognises her.

'Her large dark eyes sparkle with genius; her hair, black as ebony, falls in waving ringlets on her shoulders; her features are more strongly marked than delicate, — one reads in them something above the destiny of her sex.

'Thus would we paint the muse of poetry, or Clio, or Melpomene. "See her! See her!" they exclaim, wherever she appears; and we hold our breath as she approaches.

'I had before seen the Pythia of Delphi, and the Sybil of Cumæ; but they were wild; their gestures had a convulsive air; they seemed less filled with the presence of the god, than devoured by the Furies. The young priestess is animated, without excess, and inspired, without intoxication. Her charm is freedom; all her supernatural gifts seem to be a part of herself.

'She took her lyre of gold and ivory, and began to sing the praises of Apollo. The music and the words were not prepared. In the celestial poetic fire that

kindled in her face, and in the profound attention of the people, you could see that her imagination created the song; and our ears, at once astonished and delighted, knew not which to admire most, the facility, or the perfection.

'A short time after, she laid aside her lyre, and talked of the great truths of nature, — of the immortality of the soul, of the love of liberty, of the charm and the danger of the passions. To hear her, one would have said there was the experience of many souls mingled into one: seeing her youth, we were ready to ask how she had been able thus to anticipate life, and to exist before she was born. I have looked and listened with transport. I have discovered in her features a charm superior to beauty. What an endless play of variety in the expression of her countenance! What inflexions in the sound of her voice! What a perfect correspondence between the thought and the expression! She speaks — and, if I do not hear her words, her tones, her gestures, and her looks convey to me her meaning. She pauses — her last words resound in my heart, and I read in her eyes what she is yet about to say. She is silent — and the temple resounds with applause; she bows her head in modesty; her long eye-lashes fall over her eyes of fire; and the sun is veiled from our sight!'

Such was Madame de Staël in the lustre of her youth — advancing with joy and confidence into a life, which promised nothing but happiness. She was herself too kind to admit of any forebodings of hatred, and too great an admirer of genius in others to suspect that it could be envied. But alas! though

'Some flowers of Eden we still may inherit,
The trail of the serpent is over them all.'

Such remarkable and obvious superiority could not be cheerfully tolerated by the narrow-minded and the selfish. Mademoiselle Necker might have been forgiven for being the richest heiress in the kingdom; but they could not pardon the fascination of talent, thus eclipsing beauty and overshadowing rank. The power of intellect is borne with less patience than the tyranny of wealth; for genius cannot, like money, be loaned at six per cent.

Accordingly we find an extreme willingness to repeat any thing to the disadvantage of Mademoiselle Necker. Anecdotes were busily circulated about her early awkwardness, her untameable gayety, the blunders that originated in her defect of sight, and, more than all, the mistakes into which she had been led by her warm, unsuspecting temper, and the tricks that had been practised upon her in consequence of the discovery of her foibles. — 'Envy, party-spirit, the strong temptation to be witty at the expense of such a person, have multiplied ill-natured stories, eagerly repeated even by those who courted her society, and whom she believed to be her friends; thus giving, without intending it, the measure of their own inferiority, by the exclusive notice they took of such peculiarities of character as happened to be nearest their own level.'* Neglecting to make a courtesy, and having a little piece of trimming ripped from her dress, when she was presented at court after her marriage, — and her having left her cap in the car-

* Simond.

riage, when she visited Madame de Polignac, furnished subjects of amusement for all Paris !

But she herself recounted her own blunders with such infinite grace and good-humor, that there was no withstanding her. Bad indeed must have been the temper that could long resist the winning influence of her amiable manners. ' When she appeared the most eagerly engaged in conversation, she could always detect her adversaries at a glance, and was sure to captivate or disarm them as the conversation proceeded. She had a singular degree of tact in guessing what reply to make to reproaches that had not been expressed. She never allowed herself to be tedious, and she never indulged in asperity. If a dispute threatened to be serious, she gave it a playful turn, and by one happy word restored harmony. In fact no one would have been encouraged in an attempt to disconcert or vex her ; for, as she deeply interested while she amused her hearers, they would have cordially joined against the aggressor ; and, could any one have succeeded in silencing her eloquence, he would have despaired of being able to supply her place.'

M. Necker's wealth, and his daughter's extraordinary powers of pleasing, soon attracted suitors. Her parents were extremely ambitious for her ; and the choice was not decided without difficulty ; for she insisted upon not being obliged to leave France, and her mother made it a point that she should not marry a Catholic. We are told that she refused several distinguished men. Sir John Sinclair, in his Correspondence, speaks of a projected union between the son of Lord Rivers and Mademoiselle Necker, and regrets that it did not

take place, as it would have withdrawn her family from the vortex of French politics ; but I find no allusion elsewhere to this English marriage, and Sir John does not inform us upon what authority his remark is founded. In her works, Madame de Staël constantly expresses great admiration of England, and she chose to give her Corinna an English lover. Whether this taste, so singular in a Frenchwoman, had any thing to do with her early recollections, I know not.

Her fate was at last decided by Eric-Magnus, Baron de Staël Holstein, a Swedish nobleman, secretary to the ambassador from the court of Stockholm. He is said to have had an amiable disposition, a fine person, and courtly manners ; but we are not told that in point of intellect he possessed any distinguished claims to the hand of Mademoiselle Necker. Like a good many personages in history, he seems to have accidentally fallen upon greatness by pleasing the fancies of his superiors, or coming in contact with their policy. He was a favorite with Maria Antoinette, who constantly advanced his interests by her patronage ; he was likewise the bosom friend of Count Fersen, who at that time had great influence at court.

The queen warmly urged his suit ; Gustavus III. willing to please Marie Antoinette, and to secure such a large fortune to one of his subjects, recalled the Swedish ambassador, and appointed the Baron de Staël in his place, promising that he should enjoy that high rank for many years ; and the lover himself, in order to remove the scruples the young lady had with regard to marrying a foreigner, pledged his honor that she should never be urged to quit France.

Sir John Sinclair tells us, that M. Necker was supposed to favor the match, in hopes of being restored to office through the influence of the Queen and Count Fersen ; but such a motive is not at all consistent with the character Madame de Staël has given of her father, who, she says, ' in every circumstance of his life, preferred the least of his duties to the most important of his interests.'

She herself probably imagined the connexion might be of use to her beloved parents ; and her ambition might have been tempted by her lover's rank as a nobleman and ambassador ; at least it is difficult to account in any other manner for her union with a foreigner considerably older than herself, and with whom she had few points of sympathy in character, or pursuits ; it was a notorious fact that she was never over-fond of the match, and entered into the necessary arrangements with great coldness.

She was married to the Baron de Staël in 1786, and the bridegroom received on his wedding-day, eighty thousand pounds as her dowry.

This union, like most marriages of policy, was far from being a happy one. Had Madame de Staël been a heartless, selfish character, such a destiny would have been good enough ; but they were indeed cruel, who assisted in imposing such icy fetters on a soul so ardent, generous, and affectionate as hers. Nature, as usual, rebelled against the tyranny of ambition. We are told, by her friends, and indeed there is internal evidence in most of her works, that her life was one long sigh for domestic love.

When she became a mother, she used playfully to say, 'I will *force* my daughter to make a marriage of *inclination*.'

The impetuosity of an unsatisfied spirit gave a singular degree of vehemence to all her attachments; her gratitude and friendship took the coloring of ardent love. She was extremely sensitive where her heart was concerned; and at the slightest neglect, real or imaginary, from her friends, she would exclaim with bitter emphasis, 'Never, never have I been loved as I love others!'

When she was the most carried away by the excitement of society, and the impetuous inspiration of her own spirit, it was impossible for a friend to glide away unperceived by her. This watchful anxiety was the source of frequent reproaches; she was forever accusing her friends of a diminution in their love. Madame de Saussure once said to her, 'Your friends have to submit each morning to renewed charges of coldness and neglect.' 'What matter for that,' she replied, 'if I love them the better every evening?' She used to say, 'I would go the scaffold, in order to try the friendship of those who accompanied me.'

Yet, with all her extreme susceptibility and enthusiasm, she was not blind to the slightest defects. With her, character always passed under a close and rigorous examination; but if she sometimes wounded the vanity of her friends by being too clear-sighted to their imperfections, they were soothed by her enthusiastic admiration of all their great and good qualities. Indeed she might well be forgiven by others, since her acute

powers of analysis were directed against her own character, with the most unsparing severity.

The winter after Madame de Staël's marriage, her father was exiled forty leagues from Paris, and she was with him during the greater part of his absence. In the August following, 1788, he was recalled with added honors, and his daughter, of course, became one of the most important personages in France. But while she formed the centre of attraction in the fashionable and intellectual society of Paris, she did not relinquish her taste for literature. In 1789, she published her famous Letters on the Character and Writings of J. J. Rousseau. The judicious will not approve of all the opinions expressed in this book; and perhaps she herself would have viewed things differently when riper years and maturer judgment had somewhat subdued the artificial glare which youth and romance are so apt to throw over wrong actions and false theories. 'It is, however, a glowing and eloquent tribute to the genius of that extraordinary man; and the acuteness, shown in her remarks on the Emilius, and the Treatise on the Social Contract, is truly wonderful in a young woman so much engrossed by the glittering distractions of fashionable life.'

At first only a few copies were printed for her intimate friends; but a full edition was soon published without her consent. The Baron de Grimm, who saw one of the private copies, speaks of it with great admiration as one of the most remarkable productions of the time.

Before the year expired, we find her involved in anxiety and trouble occasioned by the second exile of her

father. His dismission from office excited great clamor among the populace, who regarded him as the friend of liberty and the people. This feeling was openly expressed by closing the theatres, as for some great national calamity. The consequence was an almost immediate recall; and Madame de Staël warmly exulted in the triumph of a parent, whom she seems to have regarded with a feeling little short of idolatry.

'From the moment of his return, in July, 1789, to the period of his final fall from power, in September, 1790, M. Necker was all-powerful in France; and Madame de Staël, of course, was a person of proportional consequence in the literary, philosophical, and political society about the court, and in those more troubled circles from which the Revolution was just beginning to go forth in its most alarming forms. Her situation enabled her to see the sources, however secret, of all the movements that were then agitating the very foundations of civil order in France; and she had talent to understand them with great clearness and truth. She witnessed the violent removal of the king to Paris on the 6th of October; she was present at the first meeting of the National Convention, and heard Mirabeau and Barnave; she followed the procession to Nôtre Dame, to hear Louis XVI. swear to a constitution, which virtually dethroned him; and from that period, her mind seems to have received a political tendency, that it never afterward lost.

'In 1790, she passed a short time with her father at Coppet, but soon returned to Paris.

'She associated, on terms of intimacy, with Talleyrand, for whom she wrote the most important part of his

Report on Public Instruction, in 1790. She likewise numbered among her friends, La Fayette, Narbonne, Sieyes, and other popular leaders.'

When, amid the universal consternation, there could be no one found to shelter the proscribed victims of the despotic mob, Madame de Staël had the courage to offer some of them an asylum, hoping the residence of a foreign ambassador would not be searched. She shut them up in the remotest chamber, and herself spent the night in watching the streets.

M. de Narbonne was concealed in her house, when the officers of police came to make the much-dreaded 'domiciliary visit.' She knew that he could not escape, if a rigorous search were made, and that, if taken, he would be beheaded that very day. She had sufficient presence of mind to keep quite calm. Partly by her eloquence, and partly by a familiar pleasantry, which flattered them, she persuaded the men to go away without infringing upon the rights of a foreign ambassador.

Dr. Bollman, the same generous Hanoverian who afterward attempted to rescue La Fayette from the prison of Olmutz, offered to undertake the dangerous business of conveying Narbonne to England; and he effected it in safety by means of a passport belonging to one of his friends.

As Sweden refused to acknowledge the French Republic, the situation of the Baron de Staël became very uncomfortable at Paris; and he was recalled in 1792, a short time before the death of Gustavus III. In September, 1792, Madame de Staël set out for Switzerland, in a coach and six, with servants in full livery; she

was induced to do this, from the idea that the people would let her depart more freely, if they saw her in the style of an ambassadress. This was ill-judged ; a shabby post-chaise would have conveyed her more safely. A ferocious crowd stopped the horses, calling out loudly that she was carrying away the gold of the nation. A *gen-d'arme* conducted her through half Paris to the Hotel de Ville, on the staircase of which several persons had been massacred. No woman had at that time perished ; but the next day the Princess Lamballe was murdered by the populace. Madame de Staël was three hours in making her way through the crowds that on all sides assailed her with cries of death. They had nothing against her personally, and probably did not know who she was ; but a carriage and liveries, in their eyes, warranted sentence of execution. She was then pregnant ; and a *gen-d'arme*, who was placed in the coach, was moved with compassion at her situation and excessive terror ; he promised to defend her at the peril of his life. She says, ' I alighted from my carriage, in the midst of an armed multitude, and proceeded under an arch of pikes. In ascending the staircase, which was likewise bristled with spears, a man pointed toward me the one which he held in his hand ; but my *gen-d'arme* pushed it away with his sabre. The President of the Commune was Robespierre ; and I breathed again, because I had escaped from the populace ; yet what a protector was Robespierre ! His secretary had left his beard untouched for a fortnight, that he might escape all suspicion of aristocracy. I showed my passports, and stated the right I had to depart as ambassadress of Sweden. Luckily for me, Manuel arrived ; he was a

man of good feelings, though he was hurried away by his passions. In an interview, a few days before, I had wrought upon his kind disposition so that he consented to save two victims of proscription. He immediately offered to become responsible for me ; and, conducting me out of that terrible place, he locked me up with my maid-servant in his closet. Here we waited six hours, half dead with hunger and fright. The window of the apartment looked on the *Place de Grève*, and we saw the assassins returning from the prisons, with their arms bare and bloody, and uttering horrible cries.

'My coach with its baggage had remained in the middle of the square. I saw a tall man in the dress of a national guard, who for two hours defended it from the plunder of the populace ; I wondered how he could think of such trifling things amid such awful circumstances. In the evening, this man entered my room with Manuel. He was Santerre, the brewer, afterwards so notorious for his cruelty. He had several times witnessed my father's distribution of corn among the poor of the *Fauxbourg St. Antoine*, and was willing to show his gratitude.

'Manuel bitterly deplored the assassinations that were going on, and which he had not power to prevent. An abyss was opened behind the steps of every man who had acquired any authority, and, if he receded, he must fall into it. He conducted me home at night in his carriage ; being afraid of losing his popularity by doing it in the day. The lamps were not lighted in the streets, and we met men with torches, the glare of which was more frightful than the darkness. Manuel was often stopped and asked who he was, but when he answered

Le Procureur de la Commune, this Revolutionary dignitary was respectfully recognised.'

A new passport was given Madame de Staël, and she was allowed to depart with one maid-servant, and a *gen-d'arme* to attend her to the frontier. After some difficulties of a less alarming nature, she arrived at Coppet in safety.

During the following year, her feelings were too painfully engrossed in watching the approaching political crisis, to admit of her making any new literary exertion.

She and her father having always strongly advocated a constitutional form of government, felt identified with the cause of rational freedom, and watched the ruin of the hopes they had formed with sad earnestness and bitter regret.

They have been frequently accused by their political enemies of having excited and encouraged the horrible disorders of the Revolution ; indeed the rancor of party-spirit went so far as to accuse Madame de Staël, — the glorious, the amiable Madame de Staël ! — of having been among the brutal mob at Versailles, disguised as a *Poissarde*. Nothing could in fact have been more untrue than charges of this description. Zealous friends of the equal rights of man, M. Necker and his sagacious daughter saw plainly that a change was needed in the French government, and no doubt they touched the springs, which set the great machine in motion ; but they could not foresee its frightful accumulation of power, or the ruinous work to which it would be directed. The limited monarchy of England was always a favorite model with Madame de Staël. In her conver-

sation, and in her writings, she has declared that the French people needed such a form of government, and, sooner or later, they would have it.

Had the character of Louis XVI. been adapted to the crisis in which he lived, her wishes might have been realized; but she evinced her usual penetration when she said of that monarch, 'He would have made the mildest of despots, or the most constitutional of kings; but he was totally unfit for the period when public opinion was making a transition from one to the other.' To save the royal family from untimely death was the object of Madame de Staël's unceasing prayers and efforts. Having been defeated in a plan to effect their escape from France, we find her, during this agitating period, silently awaiting the progress of events, which she dared not attempt to control; but when Marie Antoinette was condemned to be beheaded, she could no longer restrain her agonized spirit. In August, 1793, heedless of the danger she incurred, she boldly published Reflections on the Process against the Queen. 'A short but most eloquent appeal to the French nation, beseeching them to pause and reflect, before they should thus disgrace themselves with the world, and with posterity.' History informs us how entirely this and all other disinterested efforts failed to check the fury of the populace. The Revolution rushed madly on in its infernal course of blood and crime.

With the death of Gustavus III. there came a change of politics in Sweden. The Baron de Staël was again sent to Paris, the only ambassador from a monarchy to the new republic. Most of his old friends were proscribed, or imprisoned, and many of them had perished

on the scaffold; even the family of his wife did not dare to reside in France. To secure popularity in his precarious situation, he gave three thousand francs to the poor of *La Croix Rouge*, a section particularly distinguished for its republicanism. He could not, however, feel secure amid the frightful scenes that were passing around him; and he soon hastened back to Sweden, where he remained until after the death of Robespierre. 'For a short time, during those dreadful months, which have been so appropriately termed the Reign of Terror, Madame de Staël was in England; and, what is remarkable, she was in England, poor; for the situation of the two countries at that crisis prevented her receiving the funds necessary for her support. She lived in great retirement at Richmond, with two of her countrymen no less distinguished than Narbonne and Talleyrand, both, like herself, anxiously watching the progress of affairs in France, and hoping for some change that would render it safe for them to return. It is a curious item in the fickle cruelty of the Revolution, that these three persons, who, during such a considerable portion of their lives, exercised an influence, not only on their country, but on the world, were now deprived of their accustomed means of subsistence; and it is worthy of notice, as a trait in their national character, that they were not depressed nor discouraged by it.

'All they had, when thrown into the common stock, was merely sufficient to purchase a kind of carriage, which would hold but two. As they rode about to see the country, Narbonne and Talleyrand alternately

mounted as footmen behind, breaking out the glass of the chaise, in order to carry on a conversation with those inside. Madame de Staël has often said that, in these conversations, she has witnessed and enjoyed more of the play of the highest order of talent than at any other period of her life. Talleyrand came from England to the United States. Narbonne, if I mistake not, went to the continent; and Madame de Staël ventured back to France, in 1795. Her husband was again ambassador at Paris, where he remained, calmly receiving the alternate insolence and flattery of the populace, until 1799, when he was recalled by the young king, Gustavus Adolphus. All beneath the surface in France was, at that time, heaving and tumultuous; but men had been so terrified and wearied with the work of blood, that society was for a time restored to external stillness.

'At such a period, a mind like Madame de Staël's had a powerful influence. Her saloon was a resort for all the restless politicians of the day, and she was once denounced to the Convention as a person dangerous to the state; but her character, as wife of a foreign ambassador, protected her; and she even ventured to publish a pamphlet on the prospect of peace, addressed to Mr. Pitt and the French people, which contained remarks opposed to the views of the reigning demagogue. This pamphlet was much praised by Mr. Fox in the English Parliament.

The principal charge brought against her by the Directory, was the courage and zeal with which she served the suffering emigrants: she would have been impris-

oned on this account, had it not been for the friendly exertions of Barras.

One day, an emigrant, whose brother was arrested and condemned to be shot, came in great agitation to beg her to save his life. She recollected that she had some acquaintance with General Lemoine, who had a right to suspend the judgments of the military commission. Thanking Heaven for the idea, she instantly went to his house.

At first, he abruptly refused her petition. She says, 'My heart throbbed at the sight of that brother, who might think that I was not employing the words best fitted to obtain what I asked. I was afraid of saying too much or too little; of losing the fatal hour, after which all would be over; or of neglecting an argument, which might prove successful. I looked by turns at the clock and the General, to see whether his soul or time would approach the term most quickly. Twice he took the pen to sign a reprieve, and twice the fear of committing himself restrained him. At last, he was unable to refuse us; and may heaven shower blessings on him for the deed. The reprieve arrived in season, and innocence was saved!'

In 1796, Madame de Staël was summoned to Coppet to attend the death-bed of her mother. She has given us a very interesting account of her father's unwearied tenderness toward his dying wife, in the Preface to M. Necker's MSS. published by her after his death. She remained to soothe her father under his severe affliction, for nearly a year. During this time, she wrote her Essay on the Passions, divided into two parts: 1st, their Influence on the Happiness of Individuals; 2d, on

the Happiness of Nations. This work was suggested by the fearful scenes of the French Revolution, and probably could not have been written, except by one who had witnessed the reckless violence and unnatural excitement of that awful period. It bears the marks of her peculiar strength, originality, and fervor; but it is accused of great metaphysical obscurity, and of presenting too dark and lurid a picture of the human mind. Mr. Jeffrey, in a review of Madame de Staël, says, 'She always represents men a great deal more unhappy, more depraved, and more energetic, than they are; she varnishes all her pictures with the glare of an extravagant enthusiasm.'

This is undoubtedly just; but it is excused by the peculiar circumstances of the times in which she lived, acting on her ardent feelings and powerful imagination. No one but a witness of the French Revolution could have ranked a love of guilt and violence among the inherent passions of our nature.

The second part, intended to embrace the principal object of the work, was never finished.

We have already mentioned that Madame de Staël's affections were supposed to have small share in her marriage. The coolness of her feelings toward the Baron de Staël was considerably increased by his heedless extravagance. On his wedding-day, he is said to have assigned all his ministerial allowance to his friend, Count Fersen; and the princely dowry he received with his wife was soon nearly dissipated by his thoughtless expenditure. Such was the embarrassment of his affairs, that Madame de Staël thought it a duty to place herself and her three children under

the protection of her father. Thus the projectors of this match met the usual fate of those, who attempt to thwart nature, and take destiny out of the hands of Providence : it not only made the parties wretched, but it did not even serve the ambitious purposes for which the sacrifice is supposed to have been made.

Her separation from her husband was not of long continuance. Illness, and approaching age required a wife's attentions ; and Madame de Staël, true to the kind impulses of her generous nature, immediately returned to him. As soon as he could bear removal, she attempted, by slow journeys, to bring him to her father's residence, that she and her children might make the evening of his days as cheerful as possible. It was, however, destined to be otherwise ; he died at Poligni, on his way to Coppet, May 9th, 1802.

' Madame de Staël's Essays on the Passions led her mind to a series of inquiries, which ended in her celebrated Essay on Literature, considered in its relations with the Social Institutions. She devoted four years of severe labor to this work. It was begun at Coppet in 1796, and published in 1800. This great subject is divided into two parts : 1st, the Influence of Religion, Manners, and Laws on Literature, with the reciprocal Influence of Literature on Religion, Manners, and Laws ; and 2d, the existing state and future prospects of all in France at the time she wrote. ' It is a bold and powerful review, by masses, of the relation of society to literature and of literature to society, from the time of Homer to the year 1789. The theory of the perfectibility of the human race, early struck the imagination

of Madame de Staël; and her efforts to prove this theory by the history of the world, and the progress of literature, has led her into difficulties, and mistakes in this important work; it is, however, a beautiful whole, and deservedly placed her in the first rank among the writers of the age.

'Immediately after the completion of this remarkable book, Madame de Staël went to Paris, where she arrived on the 9th of November, 1799 — the very day that placed the destiny of France in the hands of Bonaparte.' Her imagination seems to have been, at first, dazzled by the military glory of Napoleon. Lavalette was introduced to her at Talleyrand's, at the time when every body was talking of the brilliant campaigns in Italy. He says, 'During dinner, the praises Madame de Staël lavished on the conqueror of Italy had all the wildness, romance, and exaggeration of poetry. When we left the table, the company withdrew to a small room, to look at the portrait of the hero; and, as I stepped back to let her walk in, she said, "How shall I *dare* to pass before an aid-de-camp of Bonaparte!" My confusion was so great that she also felt a little of it, and Talleyrand laughed at us.'

In her work on the French Revolution, she says, 'It was with a sentiment of great admiration that I first saw Bonaparte at Paris. I could not find words to reply to him when he came to me to say that he had sought my father at Coppet, and regretted having passed through Switzerland without seeing him. But, when I was a little recovered from the confusion of admiration, a strongly-marked sentiment of fear succeeded. He, at that time, had no power; the fear he inspired

was caused only by the singular effect of his person upon nearly all who approached him. Far from recovering my confidence at seeing him more frequently, he constantly intimidated me more and more. I had a confused feeling that no emotion of the heart could act upon him. He regarded a human being as a thing, not as a fellow-creature. For him nothing existed but himself. Every time he spoke I was struck with his superiority ; his discourse had no similitude to that of intellectual and cultivated men ; but it indicated an acute perception of circumstances, such as the sportsman has of the game he pursues. He related the political and military events of his life in a very interesting manner ; he had even something of Italian imagination in narratives which admitted of gayety. But nothing could overcome my invincible aversion to what I perceived in his character. There was in him a profound irony, from which nothing grand or beautiful escaped ; his wit was like the cold, sharp sword in romance, which froze the wound it inflicted. I could never breathe freely in his presence. I examined him with attention ; but when he observed that my looks were fixed upon him, he had the art of taking away all expression from his eyes, as if they had been suddenly changed to marble.'

Notwithstanding these feelings of fear and distrust, Madame de Staël seems to have been willing to produce an impression upon the First Consul. This might have originated in ambition to obtain the confidence of a man likely to possess so much political power ; or in vanity, slightly piqued by the indifference with which he treated her, in common with all other

women ; for indifference was a thing to which Madame de Staël was entirely unaccustomed.

Sir Walter Scott tells us, that she once asked Bonaparte, rather abruptly, in the middle of a brilliant party at Talleyrand's, 'whom he considered the greatest woman in the world, alive or dead ?' 'Her, madam, who has borne the most children,' replied Bonaparte, with much appearance of simplicity. Disconcerted by this rejoinder, in which was combined the selfishness of a politician with the grossness of a sensualist, she observed, that 'he was reported not to be a great admirer of the fair sex.' 'I am very fond of my wife, madam,' he replied, with one of those brief yet piquant observations, which adjourned a debate as promptly as one of his characteristic manœuvres would have ended a battle.'

According to Bourriénne, this sort of abruptness towards ladies was nothing unusual in Napoleon. He tells us that he often indulged in such rude exclamations as the following,—'How red your elbows are !' 'What a strange head-dress you wear !' 'Pray, tell me if you ever change your gown !' &c.

An anecdote Madame de Staël herself tells in her Ten Years' Exile, betrays a wish that Bonaparte should at least be afraid of her talents. 'I was invited to General Berthier's one day,' says she, 'when the First Consul was to be of the party. As I knew he had expressed himself unfavorably about me, it occurred to me, that he might accost me with some of those rude expressions, which he often took pleasure in addressing to ladies, even when they paid court to him ; for this reason, I wrote a number of tart and piquant replies to

what I supposed he might say. Had he chosen to insult me, it would have shown a want both of character and understanding to have been taken by surprise; and as no person could be sure of being unembarrassed in the presence of such a man, I prepared myself beforehand to brave him. Fortunately, the precaution was unnecessary; he only addressed the most common questions to me.'

In fact, to Bonaparte's habitual contempt of women, was added some fear of Madame de Staël's penetration, as well as her politics. 'He was disposed to repel the advances of one, whose views were so shrewd, and her observation so keen, while her sex permitted her to push her inquiries farther than one man might have dared to do in conversation with another.'

Besides all this, she was the only writer of any notoriety in France, who had never in any way alluded to him or his government; and, like her, he probably would have preferred sarcasm to silence. Moreover, Bonaparte, for a great man, had some very narrow views, and very contemptible feelings. Perhaps he indulged somewhat of jealousy toward a woman, who in his own capital was such a powerful competitor for fame.

He judged rightly when he supposed that her great abilities would all be exerted in opposition to his ambitious views. Her peculiar position in society brought her in contact with almost every person of rank and influence; and this, united with her own uncommon sagacity, soon enabled her to discover his real character and intentions. From the moment she understood him, she became one of the most active and determined of his opposers. In the beginning of his reign, when policy com-

pelled him to be gradual in his usurpation of power, she was not a little troublesome to him. In the organization of the new government, she is said to have fairly outmanœuvred him, and to have placed the celebrated Benjamin Constant in one of the assemblies, in spite of his efforts to the contrary. Bonaparte kept close watch upon her; and his spies soon informed him that people always left Madame de Staël's house with less confidence in him, than they had when they entered it.

Joseph Bonaparte said to her, 'My brother complains of you. He asked me yesterday, 'Why does not Madame de Staël attach herself to my government? Does she want the payment of her father's deposit? I will give orders for it. Does she wish for a residence in Paris? I will allow it her. In short, what is it that she wishes?'' Madame de Staël replied, 'The question is not what I *wish*, but what I *think*.' She says, 'I know not whether Joseph reported this answer to Napoleon; but if he did, I am certain he attached no meaning to it; for he believes in the sincerity of no one's opinions; he considers every kind of morality as nothing more than a form, or as the regular means of forwarding selfish and ambitious views.

'Integrity, whether encountered in individuals or nations, was the only thing for which he knew not how to calculate; his artifices were disconcerted by honesty, as evil spirits are exorcised by the sign of the cross.'

A zealous friend of liberty, so clear-sighted to his views, and so openly his enemy, was of course a very inconvenient obstacle in the path of Napoleon. Being anxious for a pretext to banish her, he seized upon the first that offered, which happened to be the publication

of a political pamphlet by her father, in 1802. On the pretence that she had contributed to the falsehoods, which he said it contained, he requested Talleyrand to inform her that she must quit Paris. This was a delicate office for an old acquaintance to perform ; but Talleyrand was even then used to difficult positions. His political history has proved that no fall, however precipitate, could bewilder the selfish acuteness of his faculties, or impair the marvellous pliancy of his motions: his attachment to *places* rather than persons is another, and stronger point of resemblance, between him and a certain household animal.

An anecdote which has been often repeated is a good specimen of his diplomatic adroitness: Madame de Staël, being in a boat with him and Madame Grand, afterward his wife, put his gallantry to the proof by asking him 'which he would try to save, if they should both chance to fall in the water?' 'My dear madam,' replied Talleyrand, 'I should be so sure that *you* would know how to swim.'

His characteristic finesse was shown in his manner of performing the embarrassing office assigned him by the First Consul. He called upon Madame de Staël and after a few compliments, said, 'I hear, madam, you are going to take a journey.' 'Oh, no! it is a mistake, I have no such intention.' 'Pardon me, I was informed that you were going to Switzerland.' 'I have no such project, I assure you.' 'But I have been told, *on the best authority*, that you would quit Paris in three days.' Madame de Staël took the hint, and went to Coppet.

In the meantime, however, before she left Paris, she completed a novel in six volumes, under the title of Del-

phine, which was published in 1802. This work is an imitation of Rousseau's Nouvelle Heloise. Being written in the form of letters, it afforded facilities for embodying animated descriptions of Parisian society, and the sparkling sayings of the moment. But things of this sort, 'like the rich wines of the south, though delicious in their native soil, lose their spirit by transportation.'

Delphine is a brilliant and unhappy being, governed by her feelings, and misled by her haughty sense of freedom. The reader at once suspects that, under a slight veil of fiction, the author is her own heroine: and though there are some intentional points of difference, I presume that Delphine is a pretty correct portrait of Madame de Staël's impetuous and susceptible character at the time she wrote it. 'This book has all the extravagance and immorality of the Nouvelle Heloise, but is inferior to its model in eloquence and enthusiasm.'

In 1803, Madame de Staël ventured to reside within ten leagues of Paris, occasionally going there, to visit the museum and the theatres. Some of her enemies informed Bonaparte that she received a great many visiters, and he immediately banished her to the distance of forty leagues from the capital; a sentence which was rigorously enforced. This severity excited the more remark as she was the first woman exiled by Bonaparte. A panegyrist of Napoleon has implied that she incurred his hatred by persecuting him with her love; that she was always telling him none but an intellectual woman was fit to be his mate, that genius should unite with genius, &c.

This is unquestionably a fable. If she made such remarks to the hero, it could not have been with a view

to herself; for he married Josephine several years before the death of the Baron de Staël. Her own account of her feelings towards Bonaparte is sufficiently frank and explicit to warrant our belief in its truth.

Joseph Bonaparte, of whose uniform kindness Madame de Staël speaks very gratefully, interceded in her favor; and his wife even dared to invite her to spend a few days at their country-seat, at the very time when she was the object of Napoleon's persecution.

Bonaparte knew enough of Madame de Staël's character to be aware that an exile from Paris would be a most terrible calamity. The excitement of society was almost as necessary to her existence, as the air she breathed; reluctant to relinquish it, she lingered near the metropolis as long as she dared, before taking her final departure for Switzerland.

Nothing could be more intimate and delightful than the friendship between M. Necker and his highly-gifted daughter; but notwithstanding the happiness she enjoyed in his society, and the delight she took in the education of her children, Madame de Staël sighed for the intellectual excitements of Paris. She had been so long accustomed to society, that it became an indispensable impulse to her genius and her gayety. She reproached herself for these feelings, and made strong efforts to become habituated to the monotony of a secluded life. But she no longer seemed like herself. Madame de Staël, thus tamed, was no longer Madame de Staël.

Her father, conscious how much she needed the exhilarating influence of society, had always encouraged her visits to Paris; and now that she was exiled from the scene of so many triumphs and so much enjoyment,

he strongly favored her project of visiting Germany. Accordingly, in the winter of 1803, she went to Frankfort, Weimar, and Berlin.

A greater contrast to the German style of manners can hardly be imagined. "They could not at all appreciate or understand such a phenomenon as Madame de Staël must have appeared in those days. She whisked through their skies, like a meteor, before they could bring the telescope of their wits to a right focus for observation." But there, as elsewhere, she was admired and followed. Bettina von Arnim writes thus to the mother of Goethe: "Now I will just tell you that I supped with de Staël yesterday, at Mainz. No lady would undertake to sit next her; so I sat myself beside her, and uncomfortable enough it was. The gentlemen stood round the table, and planted themselves all behind us, pressing one upon the other, only to speak with or look at her. They leaned quite over me, and I said in French, 'Your adorers quite suffocate me;' at which she laughed. There came at last so many, who all wanted to speak with her, across and over me, that I could endure it no longer, and said, 'Your laurels press too heavily upon my shoulders.' I got up, and made my way through her admirers. Then Sismondi, her companion, came and kissed my hand, and said I had much talent. This he told over to the rest, and they repeated it at least twenty times, as if I had been a prince, from whom everything sounds clever, be it never so common-place. I afterward listened to her while she was speaking of Goethe. She said she had expected to see a second Werter, but was mistaken, for neither his manners nor person answered the character;

and she lamented much that there was nothing of Werter about him. I was angry at such talk, and turned to Schlegel, and said to him in German, ' Madame de Staël has fallen into a twofold error, first in her expectation, and then in her opinion.' We Germans think Goethe can shake out of his sleeve twenty such heroes, equally imposing for the French ; but that he *himself* is quite another sort of hero."

In another letter to Goethe himself, Bettina thus describes the introduction of the celebrated French woman to his mother : " My misfortune took me to Frankfort, exactly as Madame de Staël passed through. I had already enjoyed her society a whole evening at Mainz. Your mother was well pleased to have my assistance ; for she was already informed that Madame de Staël would bring her a letter from you, and she wished me to play the interpreter, if she should need relief during this great catastrophe. The interview took place in the apartments of Maurice Bethmann. Your mother, either through irony or fun, had decorated herself wonderfully, but with German humor and not in French taste. I must tell you that when I looked at your mother, with three feathers upon her head, which nodded on three different sides, — one red, one white, and one blue, the French national colors, — rising from out a field of sun-flowers, my heart beat with joy and expectation. She was deeply rouged, and her great black eyes fired a burst of artillery. Round her neck, she wore the celebrated gold ornaments, given her by the queen of Prussia. Lace, of ancient fashion and great splendor, (a complete heir-loom) covered her bosom. Thus she stood, with white kid gloves. In one hand

was a curiously wrought fan, with which she set the air in motion ; the other hand, which was bared, was quite covered with sparkling stones. From time to time, she took a pinch out of a golden snuff-box, in which was set a miniature of you ; where with powdered ringlets, you are thoughtfully leaning your head upon your hand. The party of distinguished elder ladies formed a semicirle in Maurice Bethmann's bed-chamber. On the purple carpet, in the centre of which was a white field with a leopard, the company looked so stately that it might well be imposing. On the walls were ranged beautiful Indian plants, and the apartment was lighted by shaded glass globes. Opposite the semicircle stood the bed, upon a dais of two steps, also covered with purple tapestry, and on each side was a candelabra. I said to your mother, ' Madame de Staël will think she is cited before the court of Love ; for the bed yonder looks like the covered throne of Venus.' It was thought that then she might have much to answer for. At last, the long-expected one came through a suite of lighted apartments, accompanied by Benjamin Constant. She was dressed as Corinne. Her turban was of aurora and orange-colored silk, a dress of the same, with an orange tunic, girdled so high as to leave little room for her heart. Her black brows and lashes glittered, as also her lips, with a mysterious red. Her long gloves were drawn down, covering only her hand, in which she held the well-known laurel-sprig. As the apartment where she was expected lies much lower, she was obliged to descend four steps. Unfortunately, she held up her dress before instead of behind ; this gave the solemnity of her reception a terrible blow ; it looked

very odd, as, clad in complete oriental style, she marched down toward the stiff dames of the virtue-enrolled Frankfort society. Your mother darted a few daring glances at me, whilst they were presented to each other. I had stationed myself apart to observe the whole scene. I perceived Madame de Staël's astonishment at the remarkable decorations and dress of your mother, who displayed an immense pride. She spread out her robe with her left hand; with her right she saluted, playing with her fan, and bowing her head with great condescension, and said, with an elevated voice, '*Je suis la mère de Goethe.*' (I am the mother of Goethe.) '*Ah je suis charmée,*' (Ah, I am charmed,) answered the authoress, and then followed a solemn stillness. Then ensued the presentation of her distinguished suite, Schlegel, Sismondi, and Constant, also curious to become acquainted with Goethe's mother. Your mother answered their civilities with a New Year's wish in French, which, with solemn courtesies, she kept murmuring between her teeth. In short, I think the audience was perfect, and gave a fine specimen of the German grandazza. Soon your mother beckoned me to her, and I was forced to play interpreter between both."

At Frankfort, Madame de Staël's daughter, then five years old, was taken dangerously ill. She knew no one in that city, and was ignorant of the language; even the physician, to whose care she entrusted the child, scarcely spoke a word of French. Speaking of her distress on this occasion, she exclaims, 'Oh, how my father shared with me in all my trouble! What letters he wrote me! What a number of consultations of

physicians, all copied with his own hand, he sent me from Geneva !'

The child recovered, and she proceeded to Weimar, so justly called the Athens of Germany ; and afterward to Berlin, where she was received with distinguished kindness by the king and queen, and the young prince Louis. At Weimar she writes, 'I resumed my courage on seeing, through all the difficulties of the language, the immense intellectual riches that existed out of France. I learnt to read German ; I listened attentively to Goethe and Wieland, who, fortunately for me, spoke French extremely well. I comprehended the mind and genius of Schiller, in spite of the difficulty he felt in expressing himself in a foreign language. The society of the Duke and Duchess of Weimar pleased me exceedingly. I passed three months there, during which the study of German literature gave me all the occupation my mind required.

My father wished me to pass the winter in Germany, and not return to him until spring. Alas ! alas ! how much I calculated on carrying back to him the harvest of new ideas which I was going to collect in this journey. He was frequently telling me that my letters and conversation were all that kept up his connexion with the world. His active and penetrating mind excited me to think, for the sake of the pleasure of talking to him. If I observed, it was to convey my impressions to him ; if I listened, it was to repeat to him.'

M. de Bonstetten, who used to see her correspondence with her father, says, ' The letters she wrote him had more spirit, ease, eloquence, and acuteness of observation, than anything she ever published.' It is deeply to be regretted that M. Necker, from motives of political

caution, always burnt these letters as soon as they had been seen by her most intimate friends. Madame de Saussure speaks of them as indescribably charming—full of striking anecdotes, and pictorial sketches. She says, 'Nothing could surpass them, but Madame de Staël's first interviews with her father, after she had been separated from him by a temporary absence. The deep emotion, which she tried to repress, lest it should excite him too much, spread itself like a torrent over all her conversation. She talked of men and things—discussed governments—and described the effects she herself had produced—with an eager joy, that continually overflowed in caresses and tears. Everything she recounted was made to bear some relation to him. The characters she portrayed were brought in lively contrast with *his* intelligence, *his* goodness, and *his* perfect integrity. However foreign the subject, it always conveyed some indirect eulogium, or some expression of tenderness, to her beloved father. What a paternal glory illuminated M. Necker's countenance as he looked and listened! How joy sparkled in those eyes, which never lost the fire of youth! Not that he believed her lavish praise—but in it he read his daughter's heart, and his own delighted in her prodigious endowments.'

The same lady relates the following anecdote, somewhat laughable in itself, but interesting as a specimen of Madame de Staël's excessive sensibility in every thing that related to her father:

'M. Necker had sent his carriage to Geneva for the purpose of bringing myself and children to Coppet. It was evening when I left home, and the carriage was overturned in a ditch. No one was injured; but as it

took some time to refit the carriage, it was quite late when we arrived at Coppet. Madame de Staël was alone in the parlor, anxiously awaiting our arrival. As soon as I began to speak of our accident, she eagerly interrupted me with, 'How did you come?' 'In your father's carriage.' 'Yes, yes, I know that—but who brought you?' 'Richard the coachman.' 'Good heavens!' she exclaimed, 'what if he should upset *my father!*'

She rung the bell violently, and ordered the coachman to be called. The man being out of the way, she was obliged to wait a moment, during which time she walked the room in great agitation.

'My poor father!' she repeated, 'what if he should be upset? At your age, and that of your children, it is nothing at all. But at his age—and so large as he is—and into a ditch too! Perhaps he would have remained there a long time, calling, and calling in vain. My poor father!'

'When the coachman appeared, I was very curious to see how she would find vent for her strong emotions; for she was proverbially very kind and affable to her domestics. She advanced solemnly toward him, and in a voice somewhat stifled, but which gradually became very loud, she said, 'Richard, have you ever heard that I have a great deal of talent?' The man stared in amazement. 'I say,' she repeated, 'do you know that I have a great deal of talent?' He remained silent and confused. 'Learn then that I have talent, great talent, prodigious talent! and I will make use of the whole of it, to keep you shut up in a dungeon all your life, if you ever upset my father!'

Alas! this sacred tie, the strongest perhaps that ever bound the hearts of parent and child, was soon to be burst asunder. At Berlin, Madame de Staël was suddenly stopped in her travels, by the news of her father's dangerous illness. She hastened back with an impatience that would fain have annihilated time and space; but he died before she arrived. This event happened in April, 1804. At first, she refused to believe the tidings. She was herself so full of life, that she could not realize death. Her father had such remarkable freshness of imagination, such cheerfulness, such entire sympathy with youthful feeling, that she forgot the difference in their ages. She could not bear to think of him as old; and once, when she heard a person call him so, she resented it highly, and said she never wished to see anybody who repeated such words. And now, when they told her that the old man was gathered to his fathers, she could not, and she would not believe it.

Madame de Saussure was at Coppet when M.Necker died; and as soon as her services to him were ended, she went to meet her friend, on her melancholy return from Germany, under the protection of M. de Schlegel, her son's German tutor. She says, the convulsive agony of her grief was absolutely frightful to witness; it seemed as if life must have perished in the struggle. Her friends tried every art to soothe her; and sometimes for a moment she appeared to give herself up to her usual animation and eloquence; but her trembling hands, and quivering lips soon betrayed the internal conflict, and the transient calm was succeeded by a violent burst of anguish. Yet even during these trying moments, she displayed her characteristic kindness of heart: she con-

stantly tried to check her sorrow, that she might give such a turn to the conversation as would put M. de Schlegel at his ease, and enable him to show his great abilities to advantage.

The impression produced upon Madame de Staël by her father's death seems to have been as deep and abiding, as it was powerful, Through her whole life, she carried him in her heart. She believed that his spirit was her guardian angel; and when her thoughts were most pure and elevated, she said it was because he was with her. She invoked him in her prayers, and when any happy event occurred, she used to say, with a sort of joyful sadness, 'My father has procured this for me.' His miniature became an object of superstitious love. Once, and once only, she parted with it for a short time. Having herself found great consolation, during illness, in looking at those beloved features, she sent it to her daughter, imagining it would have the same effect upon her; telling her in her letter, 'Look upon that, and it will comfort you in your sufferings.'

To the latest period of her life, the sight of an old man affected her, because it reminded her of her father; and the lavishness with which she gave her sympathy and her purse to the distresses of the aged, proved the fervor of her filial recollections.

Though Madame de Staël's thoughts had always been busy with the world, she was never destitute of religious sensibility. Conscious as she was of her intellectual strength, she did not attempt to wrestle with the mysteries of God. Her beautiful mind inclined rather to reverence and superstition than to unbelief. No doubt, religion was with her more a matter of feeling,

than of faith ; but she respected the feeling, and never suffered the pride of reason to expel it from her heart. There is something beautifully pathetic in the exclamation that burst from her, when her little daughter was dangerously ill at Frankfort : 'Oh what would become of a mother, trembling for the life of her child, if it were not for prayer !'

Her father's death gave a more permanent influence to such feelings. Her character became less volcanic, while it lost nothing of its power.

Anxious to be to her children what he had been to her, she spared no pains to impress them with what was excellent in his character. She frequently read with them moral and religious books. The writings of Fenelon afforded her great consolation and delight ; and during the last years of her life, the 'Imitation of Jesus Christ,' by Thomas a Kempis, was her favorite volume. She was a most affectionate and devoted mother, and singularly beloved by her children. On this subject we have the testimony of her daughter, the Duchess de Broglie, who in talent and character is said to be worthy of her high descent. She says, 'My mother attached great importance to our happiness in childhood, and affectionately shared all our little griefs. When I was twelve years old, she used to talk to me as to an equal ; and nothing gave me such delight as half an hour's intimate conversation with her. It elevated me at once, gave me new life, and inspired me with courage in all my studies. She herself heard my lessons every day ; she would not procure a governess, even in the midst of her greatest troubles. She taught us to love and pity her, without ever diminishing our reverence.

Never was there a mother who at once inspired so much confidence, and so much respect.

During the life-time of M. Necker, Madame de Staël remained in childish ignorance of all the common affairs of life. She was in the habit of applying to him for advice about everything, even her dress. The unavoidable result was that she was very improvident. Her father used to compare her to a savage, who would sell his hut in the morning, without thinking what would become of him at night.

When her guide and support was taken from her, no wonder that she felt as if it would be absolutely impossible for her to do anything without him. For a short time she gave herself up to the most discouraging fancies. She thought her fortune would be wasted, her children would not be educated, her servants would not obey her,—in short, that every thing would go wrong. But her anxiety to do every thing as *he* would have done it, gave her a motive for exertion, and inspired her with strength. She administered upon his estate with remarkable ability, and arranged her affairs with a most scrupulous regard to the future interests of her children.

Her first literary employment after the death of her father was a tribute to his memory. 'She collected his MSS. and published them, accompanied with a most eloquent and interesting memoir, full of the first deep impressions of her sorrow.' M. Constant, the celebrated statesman and writer, has said of this preface, 'Perhaps I deceive myself; but those pages appear to me more likely to lead one to a true knowledge of her character, and to endear her to those who knew her not, than her most eloquent writings on any other subject·

for her whole mind and heart are there displayed. The delicacy of her perceptions, the astonishing variety of her thought, the ardor of her eloquence, the weight of her judgment, the reality of her enthusiasm, her love of liberty and justice, her passionate sensibility, the melancholy which often marked even her purely literary writings;—all these are concentrated here, to express a single feeling, to call forth the sympathy of others in a single sentiment. Nowhere else has she treated a subject with all the resources of her intellect, all the depth of her feeling, and without being diverted by a single thought of a less absorbing nature.'

When this occupation was finished, her desolate heart fed upon its own feelings, until she could no longer endure the melancholy associations inspired by everything around her.

Her health as well as her spirits sunk rapidly under the oppression of grief. Her friends advised new scenes and change of climate. Paris was still closed against her; though M. Necker, with his dying hand, had written to assure Bonaparte that his daughter had no share in his political pamphlet, and to beseech that her sentence of exile might be repealed after his death.

Thus situated, her thoughts turned toward Italy. Sismondi accompanied her in this journey. They arrived just when the fresh glory of a southern spring mantled the earth and the heavens. She found a renovating influence in the beautiful sky and the balmy climate of this lovely land, which she, with touching superstition, ascribed to the intercession of her father. 'She passed more than a year in Italy; visiting Milan, Venice, Flo-

rence, Rome, Naples, and other more inconsiderable cities, with lively interest and great minuteness of observation. The impression produced by her talent and character is still fresh in the memories of those who saw her.'

She returned to Switzerland in the summer of 1805, and passed a year among her friends at Coppet and Geneva ; during this period she began Corinna, the splendid record which she has left the world of her visit to Italy. This work was published in 1812, and perhaps obtained more extensive and immediate fame than anything she ever wrote. It was received with one burst of applause by all the literati of Europe. Mr. Jeffrey, in his review of it, pronounced Madame de Staël 'the greatest writer in France, after the time of Voltaire and Rousseau ; and the greatest female writer of any age or country.'

Like Rousseau and Byron, Madame de Staël wrote from the impulses of her own heart, and threw something of *herself* into all her fictions. In Corinna, 'a child of the sun,' all genius and sensibility, forever departing from the line marked out by custom, and mourning over her waywardness as if it were guilt, we at once recognise Madame de Staël herself, with all her sweeping energies and irresistible inspiration. This book is characterized in an eminent degree by Madame de Staël's peculiar excellences, grandeur and pathos. As a national painting it is more fascinating than as a romance : Italy, in all the freshness of its present beauty, and the magnificence of its glorious recollections, is perfectly embalmed by her genius.

Her eldest son, Augustus, Baron de Staël, was at this time in Paris, pursuing his studies preparatory to entering the Polytechnic school ; and after the completion of Corinna, Madame de Staël, in order to be as near him as possible, went to reside at Auxerre, and afterward at Rouen, from whence she could daily send to Paris. She led a very retired life, and was extremely prudent about intermeddling with politics ; those, who had anything to hope or fear from the Emperor, did not dare to maintain any intercourse with her ; and of course she was not thronged with visiters, in those days of despotism and servility ; all she wished, was liberty to superintend the publication of Corinna, and to watch over the education of her son.

But all this moderation and caution did not satisfy Bonaparte. He wanted to interdict her writing anything, even if it were, like Corinna, totally unconnected with politics. She was again banished from France ; and, by a sad coincidence, she received the order on the ninth of April, the anniversary of her father's death. When she returned to Coppet, all her movements were watched by the spies of government, so that existence became a complete state of bondage. To use her own words, she was ' tormented in all the interests and relations of life and on all the sensible points of her character.' She still had warm and devoted friends, who could not be withdrawn from her by motives of interest, or fear ; but with all the consolations of fame and friendship, it was sufficiently inconvenient and harassing to be thus fettered and annoyed.

As a means of employing her mind, which, ever since the death of her father, had been strongly prone to in-

dulge in images of gloom and terror, Madame de Staël industriously continued the study of German literature and philosophy. Her acquaintance with M. de Schlegel and M. Villers (the author of an admirable book on the Reformation, which obtained the prize from the French Academy,) afforded her remarkable facilities for perfecting herself in the German language. Her first visit had brought her into delightful companionship with most of the great minds in North Germany; but she deemed it necessary to visit the South, before she completed a work, which she had long had in contemplation. In company with her beautiful friend, Madame Recamier, she passed the winter of 1807 at Vienna, receiving the same flattering distinctions from the great and the gifted, which had everywhere attended her footsteps.

She began her celebrated book on Germany in the country itself, and surrounded by every facility for giving a correct picture of its literature, manners, and national character; as we have just stated, she made a second visit, for the purpose of more thorough investigation; and she devoted yet two more years to it after her return; making a period of about six years from the time of its commencement to its final completion. It is true, this arduous labor was not continued uninterruptedly: she had, in the meanwhile, made her visit to Italy, and written Corinna; and while she was employed with her great work on Germany, she composed and played at Coppet the greater part of the little pieces, which are now collected in the sixteenth volume of her works, under the title of Dramatic Essays. At the beginning of the summer of 1810, she finished the three volumes of Germany, and went to reside just without

forty leagues from Paris, in order to superintend its publication. She says, 'I fixed myself at a farm called *Fossé*, which a generous friend lent me. The house was inhabited by a Vendean soldier, who certainly did not keep it in the nicest order, but who had a loyal good-nature that made everything easy, and an originality of character that was very amusing. Scarcely had we arrived, when an Italian musician, whom I had with me to give lessons to my daughter, began playing upon the guitar; and Madame Recamier's sweet voice accompanied my daughter upon the harp. The peasants collected round the windows, astonished to hear this colony of troubadours, which had come to enliven the solitude of their master. Certainly this intimate assemblage, this solitary residence, this agreeable occupation, did no harm to any one. We had imagined the idea of sitting round a green table after dinner, and writing letters to each other instead of conversing. These varied and multiplied *têtes-à-têtes* amused us so much, that we were impatient to get from table, where we were talking, in order to go and write to one another. When any strangers came in, we could not bear the interruption of our habits; and our *penny-post* always went its round. The inhabitants of the neighboring town were somewhat astonished at these new manners, and looked upon them as pedantic; though in fact, it was merely a resource against the monotony of solitude. One day a gentleman, who had never thought of anything in his life but *hunting*, came to take my boys with him into the woods; he remained some time seated at our active, but silent table. Madame Recamier wrote a little note to this jolly sportsman, in order that he might not

be too much a stranger to the circle in which he was placed. He excused himself from receiving it, assuring us that he never could read writing by daylight. We afterward laughed not a little at the disappointment our beautiful friend had met with in her benevolent coquetry; and thought that a billet from her hand would not often have met such a fate. Our life passed in this quiet manner; and, if I may judge by myself, none of us found it burdensome.

'I wished to go and see the Opera of Cinderella represented at a paltry provincial theatre at Blois. Coming out of the theatre on foot, the people followed me in crowds, more from curiosity to see the woman Bonaparte had exiled, than from any other motive. This kind of celebrity, which I owed to misfortune much more than to talent, displeased the minister of police, who wrote to the Prefect of Loire that I was surrounded by a court. "Certainly," said I to the Prefect, "it is not power that gives me a court."

'On the 23d of September, I corrected the last proof of Germany; after six years' labor, I felt great delight in writing the word *end*. I made a list of one hundred persons to whom I wished to send copies in different parts of Europe.' The work passed the censorship prescribed by law, and Madame de Staël, supposing everything was satisfactorily arranged, went with her family to visit her friend M. de Montmorency, at his residence about five leagues from Blois. This gentleman could claim the oldest hereditary rank of any nobleman in France; being able to trace back his pedigree, through a long line of glorious ancestry, to the first Baron of Christendom, in the time of Charlemagne. Madame

de Staël says, 'He was a pious man, only occupied in this world with making himself fit for heaven; in his conversation with me, he never paid any attention to the affairs of the day, but only sought to do good to my soul.'

Madame de Staël, after having passed a delightful day amid the magnificent forests and historical recollections of this ancient castle, retired to rest. In the night, M. de Montmorency was awakened by the arrival of Augustus, Baron de Staël, who came to inform him that his mother's book on Germany was likely to be destroyed, in consequence of a new edict, which had very much the appearance of being made on purpose for the occasion. Her son, as soon as he had done his errand, left M. de Montmorency to soften the blow as much as possible, but to urge his mother to return immediately after she had taken breakfast; he himself went back before day-light to see that her papers were not seized by the imperial police. Luckily, the proof-sheets of her valuable work were saved. Some further notes on Germany she had with her in a small portable desk in the carriage. As they drew near her habitation, she gave the desk to her youngest son, who jumped over a wall, and carried it into the house through the garden. Miss Randall, an English lady, an excellent and much beloved friend, came to meet her on the road, to console her as much as she could under this great disappointment. A file of soldiers were sent to her publisher's, to destroy every sheet of the ten thousand copies that had been printed. She was required to give up her MSS. and quit France in twenty-four hours. In her Ten Years' Exile, Madame de Staël drily remarks, 'It was the

custom of Bonaparte to order *conscripts* and *women* to be in readiness to quit France in twenty-four hours.'

She had given up some rough notes of her work to the police, but the spies of government had done their duty so well, that they knew there was a copy saved; they could tell the exact number of proof-sheets that had been sent to her by the publisher, and the exact number she had returned. She did not pretend to deny the fact; but she told them she had placed the copy out of her hands, and that she neither could nor would put it in their power.

The severity used on this occasion was as unnecessary as it was cruel; 'for her book on Germany contained nothing to give offence to the government. Indeed the only fault pretended to be found with it was that it was purely literary, and contained no mention of the Emperor or his wars in that country.'

The minister of police gave out, 'in *corsair terms*, that if Madame de Staël, on her return to Coppet should venture one foot within forty leagues of Paris, she was *a good prize*.' When arrived at Coppet, she received express orders not to go more than four leagues from her own house; and this was enforced with so much rigor, that having one day accidentally extended her ride a little beyond her limits, the military police were sent full speed to bring her back.

If Napoleon felt flattered that all the sovereigns of Europe were obliged to combine to keep one man on a barren island, Madame de Staël might well consider it no small compliment for one woman to be able to inspire with fear the mighty troubler of the world's peace. The fact was, Bonaparte dreaded an epigram, pointed against

himself, more than he dreaded 'infernal machines.' When he was told that no woman, however talented, could shake the foundation of his power, he replied, 'Madame de Staël carries a quiver full of arrows, that would hit a man if he were seated on a rainbow.'

She was often informed, by the creatures of government that she might easily put an end to the inconveniences she suffered, by publishing a few pages in praise of the emperor. But Madame de Staël, though her exile had cost her many hours of depression and anxiety, was too noble thus to bow the knee to a tyrant, whom her heart disliked, and her conscience disapproved.

When the prefect of Geneva urged her to celebrate in verse the birth of the king of Rome, she told him that if she did such a ridiculous thing, she should confine herself to wishing him a good nurse.

M. de Schlegel, who for eight years had been the tutor of her sons, was compelled to leave Switzerland. The best pretence the prefect could invent, on the spur of the occasion, was, that he was not *French* in his feeling, because he preferred the Phedra of *Euripides* to the Phedra of *Racine*. The real fact was, Bonaparte knew that his animated conversation cheered her solitude, and that to deprive her of society was almost to deprive her of life.

Few in this selfish world would visit one, who thus 'carried about with her the contagion of misfortune;' and she was even fearful of writing to her friends, lest she should in some way implicate them in her own difficulties. In the midst of these perplexities, her true friend, M. de Montmorency, came to make her a visit; she told him such a proof of friendship would offend the

emperor ; but he felt safe in the consciousness of a life entirely secluded from any connexion with public affairs. The day after his arrival, they rode to Fribourg, to see a convent of nuns, of the dismal order of La Trappe. She says, ' We reached the convent in the midst of a severe shower, after having been obliged to come nearly a mile on foot. I rung the bell at the gate of the cloister ; a nun appeared behind the lattice opening, through which the portress may speak to strangers. " What do you want ?" said she, in a voice without modulation, such as we might suppose that of a ghost. " I should like to see the interior of the convent." " That is impossible," she replied. " But I am very wet, and want to dry my dress." She immediately touched a spring, which opened the door of an outer apartment, in which I was allowed to rest myself ; but no living creature appeared. In a few minutes, impatient at not being able to penetrate the interior of the convent, after my long walk, I rung again. The same person re-appeared. I asked her if females were never admitted into the convent. She answered, " Only when they had the intention of becoming nuns."

' " But," said I, " how can I tell whether I should like to remain in your house, if I am not permitted to see it !" " Oh, that is quite useless," she replied, " I am very sure that you have no vocation for our state ;" and with these words she immediately shut her wicket.' Madame de Staël says she knows not how this nun discovered her worldly disposition, unless it were by her quick manner of speaking, so different from their own. Those who look at Madame de Staël's portrait, will not wonder at the nun's penetration : it needs but a single

glance at her bright dark eye, through which one can look so clearly into the depths of an ardent and busy soul, to be convinced that she was not made for the solitude and austerities of La Trappe.

Being disappointed in getting a sight of the nuns, Madame de Staël proposed to her son and M. de Montmorency to go to the famous cascade of Bex, where the water falls from a very lofty mountain. This being just within the French territory, she, without being aware of it, infringed upon her sentence of exile. The prefect blamed her very much, and made a great merit of not informing the Emperor that she had been in France. She says she might have told him, in the words of La Fontaine's fable, 'I grazed of this meadow the breadth of my tongue.' Bonaparte, finding that Madame de Staël wisely resolved to be as happy as she could, determined to make her home a solitude, by forbidding all persons to visit her.

Four days after M. de Montmorency arrived at Coppet, he was banished from France; for no other crime than having dared to offer the consolation of his society to one, who had been his intimate friend for more than twenty years, and by whose assistance he had escaped from the dangers of the Revolution.

Madame Recamier, being at that time on her way to the waters of Aix in Savoy, sent her friend word that she should stop at Coppet. Madame de Staël despatched a courier to beseech her not to come; and she wept bitterly, to think that her charming friend was so near her, without the possibility of obtaining an interview: but Madame Recamier, conscious that she had never meddled with politics, was resolved not

to pass by Coppet without seeing her. Instead of the joy that had always welcomed her arrival, she was received with a torrent of tears. She staid only one night; but, as Madame de Staël had feared, the sentence of exile smote her also. 'Thus regardless,' says she, 'did the chief of the French people, so renowned for their gallantry, show himself toward the most beautiful woman in Paris. In one day he smote virtue and distinguished rank in M. de Montmorency, beauty in Madame Recamier, and, if I dare say it, the reputation of high talent in myself.'

Not only Frenchmen, but foreigners, who wished to visit a writer of so much celebrity, were informed that they must not enter her house. The minister of police said he would have a soldier's guard mounted at the bottom of the avenue, to arrest whoever attempted to go to Coppet.

Every courier brought tidings of some friend exiled for having dared to keep up a correspondence with her; even her sons were forbidden to enter France, without a new permission from the police. In this cruel situation, Madame de Staël could only weep for those friends, who forsook her, and tremble for those, who had the courage to remain faithful. But nothing could force from her one line of flattery to the Emperor.

Her friends urged her to go beyond the power of her enemy; saying, 'If you remain, he will treat you as Elizabeth did Mary Stuart; nineteen years of misery, and the catastrophe at last.' And she herself says, 'Thus to carry about with me the contagion of calamity, to be a burden on the existence of my children, to fear to write to those I love, or even to mention their

names — this is a situation from which it is necessary to escape, or die.'

But she hesitated, and lingered long before she determined to leave the tomb of her father, where she daily offered up her prayers for support and consolation. Besides, a new feeling had at this period gained dominion over her. At Geneva, she had become acquainted with Albert-Jean-Michel de Rocca, a young officer, just returned wounded from the war of the Spanish peninsula, who feeble health, united with the accounts given of his brilliant courage, had inspired general interest. Madame de Staël visited him, as a stranger who needed the soothing voice of kindness and compassion. The first words she uttered made him her ardent lover; he talked of her incessantly. His friends represented to him the extreme improbability of gaining the affections of such a woman; he replied, '*Je l'aimerai tellement, qu'elle finira par m'aimer.*' (I will love her so, that she will finish by loving me.)

M. de Rocca had great elevation of character; his conversation was highly poetic; his affections ardent; and his style of writing animated and graceful.* His sentiments toward her were of the most romantic and chivalrous kind,—unbounded admiration was softened by extreme tenderness; her desolate heart had lost the guardian and support of early life; his state of health excited her pity; and more than all, he offered to real-

* In 1809 he published *Campagne de Walcheren et d'Anvers.* In 1814 he published a very interesting book, which was reprinted in 1817, called *Mémoirs sur la Guerre des Française en Espagne.* He left a novel in MS. called *Le Mal du Pays.* I do not know whether it was ever printed.

ize the dream she had always so fondly indulged—a marriage of love.

A strong and enduring attachment sprung up between them, which, in 1811, resulted in a private wedding. He was twenty-three, and she was forty-five years old.

The world, of course, will be disposed to smile at this union; but for myself, I would much more willingly forget her first marriage than her last. One originated in policy, and made her miserable; the other was sanctioned only by her own warm heart, and made her happy. In all things depending on themselves, the sunshine of their domestic love seems to have been without a shadow.

The precarious state of M. de Rocca's health was a source of sorrow, which she felt with a keenness proportioned to the susceptibility of her character. She watched over him with a patient, persevering attention, not a little remarkable in one to whom variety and activity were so necessary. When he was thought to be in danger, her anguish knew no bounds. She compared herself to Marshal Ney, when he expected sentence of death from one moment to another. In relation to this romantic affair, Madame de Staël was guilty of the greatest weakness of her whole life. Governed partly by a timidity, which feared 'the world's dread laugh,' and partly by a proud reluctance to relinquish the name she had made so glorious throughout Europe, she concealed the marriage from all but her children, and her most intimate friends. On every account this is to be deeply regretted. It makes us blush for an instance of silly vanity in one so truly great; and what is worse, the embarrassing situation in which she thus placed her-

self, laid her very open to the malice of her enemies, and the suspicions of the world. Scandalous stories promulgated by those, who either misunderstood, or wilfully misrepresented her character, are even now repeated, though clearly proved to be false, by those who had the very best opportunities of observing her life.

In her preference for the conversation of gentlemen, Madame de Staël had ever been as perfectly undisguised, as she was with regard to all her other tastes and opinions ; it was therefore natural that she should not be a general favorite with her own sex, though she found among women many of her most zealous and attached friends.

The intellectual sympathy, which produced so many delightful friendships between herself and distinguished men of all countries, was naturally attributed, by ladies of inferior gifts, to a source less innocent ; and to this petty malice was added strong political animosity, dark, rancorous, unprincipled and unforgiving. They even tried to make a crime of her residence in England, with Narbonne and Talleyrand—as if those days of terror, when every man, woman, and child in France slept under the guillotine, was a time for even the most scrupulous to adhere to the laws of etiquette.

After her marriage with M. de Rocca, Madame de Staël, happy in the retirement of her now cheerful home, and finding consolation in the warm affection of her children, indulged hopes that the government would leave her in peace. But Bonaparte, who no doubt heard some sort of account of the new attachment, which had given a fresh charm to her existence, caused her to be threatened with perpetual imprisonment.

Unable any longer to endure this system of vexation, she asked leave to live in Italy, promising not to publish a single line of any kind; and with something of becoming pride, she reminded the officers of government that it was the author of Corinna, who asked no other privilege than to live and die in Rome. But notwithstanding the strong claim which this beautiful work gave her to the admiration and indulgence of her countrymen, that request was refused.

Napoleon, in one of his conversations at St Helena, excuses his uninterrupted persecution of Madame de Staël, by saying, that 'she was an ambitious, intriguing woman, who would at any time have thrown her friends into the sea, for the sake of exercising her energy in saving them.'

No doubt there was much truth in this accusation. From her earliest childhood, Madame de Staël had breathed the atmosphere of politics; and she lived at an exciting period, when an active mind could scarcely forbear taking great interest in public affairs.* She was an avowed enemy to the imperial government; but, though she spoke her mind freely, we do not hear of her as engaged in any conspiracies, or even attempting to form a party.

At her Swiss retreat, when he was omnipotent in France, and she was powerless, it certainly was safe to leave her in the peaceful enjoyment of such social plea-

* Bonaparte once at a party placed himself directly before a witty and beautiful lady, and said very abruptly, 'Madame, I don't like that women should meddle with politics.'....'You are very right, General,' she replied; 'but in a country where women are beheaded, it is natural they should desire to know the reason.'

sures as were within her reach. The banishment of M. de Schlegel, M. de Montmorency, and Madame Recamier, his refusal to allow Madame de Staël to pass into Italy, and his opposition to her visiting England, seem much more like personal dislike and irritation against one, whom he could not compel to flatter him, than they do like political precaution.

Whatever were Bonaparte's motives and intentions, her friends thought it prudent to urge immediate flight; and she herself felt the necessity of it. But month after month passed away, during which time she was distracted with the most painful perplexity between her fears of a prison, and her dread of becoming a fugitive on the face of the earth. She says, 'I sometimes consulted all sorts of presages, in hopes I should be directed what to do; at other times I more wisely interrogated my friends and myself on the propriety of my departure. I am sure, that I put the patience of my friends to a severe test by my eternal discussions, and painful irresolution.'

Two attempts were made to obtain passports for America; but, after compelling her to wait a long time, the government refused to give them.

At one time she thought of going to Greece, by the route of Constantinople; but she feared to expose her daughter to the perils of such a voyage. Her next object was to reach England through the circuitous route of Russia and Sweden; but in this great undertaking her heart failed her. Having a bold imagination, and a timid character, she conjured up the phantoms of ten thousand dangers. She was afraid of robbers, of arrest,

of prisons, — and more than all, she was afraid of being advertised, in the newspapers, with all the scandalous falsehoods her enemies might think proper to invent. She said truly that she had to contend with an 'enemy with a million of soldiers, millions of revenue, all the prisons of Europe, kings for his jailers, and the press for his mouth-piece.' But the time at last came when the pressure of circumstances would no longer admit of delay. Bonaparte was preparing for his Russian campaign, and she must either precede the French troops or abandon her project entirely.

The 15th of May, 1812, was at last fixed upon for departure; and all the necessary arrangements were made with profound secrecy. When the day arrived, the uncertainty she felt seemed to her like a consciousness of being about to do something wrong; she thought she ought to yield herself up to such events as Providence ordained, and that those pious men were in the right, who always scrupled to follow an impulse originating in their own free will. She says, 'Agitated by these conflicting feelings, I wandered over the park at Coppet; I seated myself in all the places where my father had been accustomed to repose himself, and contemplate nature; I looked once more upon the beauties of water and verdure, which we had so often admired together; I bade them adieu, and recommended myself to their sweet influences. The monument that incloses the ashes of my father and my mother, and in which, if God permits, my own will be deposited, was one of the principal causes of regret I felt at banishing myself from the home of my childhood; but on approaching it, I almost always found strength, that seemed to me to

come from heaven. I passed an hour in prayer before the iron gate, which inclosed the mortal remains of the noblest of human beings; and my soul was convinced of the necessity of departure. I went once more to look at my father's study, where his easy-chair, his table, and his papers, remained as he had left them; I kissed each venerated mark; I took the cloak, which till then I had ordered to be left upon his chair, and carried it away with me, that I might wrap myself up in it, should the messenger of death approach me. When these adieus were terminated, I avoided as much as I could all other farewells. I found it less painful to part from my friends by letters, which I took care they should not receive until several days after my departure.

'On Saturday, the 23d of May, 1812, I got into my carriage, saying that I should return to dinner. I took no packet whatever; I and my daughter had only our fans. My son and M. de Rocca carried in their pockets enough to defray the expenses of several days' journey. On leaving the chateau, which had become to me like an old and valued friend, I nearly fainted. My son took my hand, and said, 'Dear mother, remember you are on your way to England.' Though nearly two thousand leagues from that goal, to which the usual road would have so speedily conducted me, I felt revived by his words; every step at least brought me something nearer to it. When I had proceeded a few leagues, I sent back one of my servants to apprize my establishment that I should not return until the next day. I continued travelling night and day as far as a farm-house beyond Berne, where I had agreed to meet M. de Schlegel, who had kindly offered to accompany me. Here I

was obliged to leave my eldest son, who for fourteen years had been educated by my father, and whose features strongly reminded me of him. Again my courage abandoned me. I thought of Switzerland, so tranquil, and so beautiful; I thought of her inhabitants, who, though they had lost political independence, knew how to be free by their virtues; and it seemed to me as if every thing told me I ought not to go. I had not yet crossed the barrier—there was still a possibility of returning. But if I went back, I knew another escape would be impossible; and I felt a sort of shame at the idea of renewing such solemn farewells. I knew not what would have become of me, if this uncertainty had lasted much longer. My children decided me; especially my daughter, who was then scarcely fourteen years old. I committed myself to her, as if the voice of God had spoken by the mouth of a child. My son took his leave; and when he was out of sight, I could say with Lord Russell, 'the bitterness of death is past'.'

The young Baron de Staël had been obliged to leave his mother, in order to attend to the interests of her fortune, and to obtain passports to go through Austria, one of whose princesses was then the wife of Napoleon. Everything depended on obtaining these passports under some name, that would not attract the attention of the police. If they were refused, Madame de Staël would be arrested, and the rigors of exile made more intolerable than ever. It was a decisive step, and one that caused her devoted son the most painful anxiety. Finally, he concluded to act, as he judiciously observes all honest men had better do in their intercourse with each other,—he threw himself directly upon the gener-

osity of the Austrian ambassador; and fortunately he had to deal with an honorable man, who made no hesitation in granting his request.

A few days after, Madame de Staël's younger son, with her servants, wardrobe, and travelling carriage, set out from Coppet, to meet his mother at Vienna. The whole had been managed with such secrecy, and the police had become so accustomed to her quiet way of life, that no suspicions were excited, until this second removal took place. The *gens-d'armes* were instantly on the alert; but Madame de Staël had too much the start of them, and had travelled too swiftly to be overtaken. In describing her flight, she says, 'The moment I most dreaded was the passage from Bavaria to Austria; for it was there a courier might precede me, and forbid me to pass. But notwithstanding my apprehensions, my health had been so much injured by anxiety and fatigue, that I could no longer travel all night. I, however, flattered myself that I should arrive without impediment; when, just as my fears were vanishing, as we approached the boundary line, a man in the inn, at Saltzburg, told M. de Schlegel that a French courier had been to inquire for a carriage coming from Inspruck, with a lady and a young girl; and had left word that he would return to get intelligence of them. I became pale with terror; and M. de Schlegel was very much alarmed; especially as he found by inquiry that the courier had been waiting for me at the Austrian frontier, and not finding me there, had returned to meet me. This was just what I had dreaded before my departure, and through the whole journey. I determined, on the spur of the moment, to leave M. de Schlegel and my daughter at

the inn, and to go on foot into the streets of the town, to take my chance at the first house whose master, or mistress, had a physiognomy that pleased me. I would remain in this asylum a few days; during this time, M. de Schlegel and my daughter might say that they were going to rejoin me in Austria; and I would afterward leave Saltzburg, disguised as a peasant. Hazardous as this resource appeared, no other remained; and I was just preparing for the task, with fear and trembling, when who should enter my apartment but this dreaded courier, who was no other than — M. de Rocca!

'He had been obliged to return to Geneva to transact some business, and now came to rejoin me. He had disguised himself as a courier, in order to take advantage of the terror which the name inspired, and to obtain horses more quickly. He had hurried on to the Austrian frontier, to make himself sure that no one had preceded, or announced me; he had returned to assure me that I had nothing to fear, and to get upon the box of my carriage until we had passed that dreaded frontier, which seemed to me the last of my dangers. In this manner were my fears changed to gratitude, joy, and confidence.'

At Vienna, Madame de Staël was obliged to wait some time for a Russian passport. The first ten days were spent very pleasantly, and her friends there assured her that she might rest in perfect security. At the end of that time, the Austrian police probably received directions concerning her from Napoleon; for they placed a guard at the gate of her house, and, whether she walked or rode, she was followed by spies.

She was at this time in a state of great uneasiness ; for, unless her Russian passport came speedily, the progress of the war would prevent her from passing into that country ; and she dared not stay in Vienna a day after the French ambassador, (who was then at Dresden,) had returned. Again she thought of Constantinople. She tried to obtain two passports to leave Austria, either by Hungary or Gallicia, so that she might decide in favor of going to Petersburg or Constantinople, according to circumstances. She was told she might have her choice of passports, but that they could not enable her to go by two different frontiers without authority from the Committee of States. She says, 'Europe seemed to her like one great net, in which travellers got entangled at every step.'

She departed for Gallicia without her Russian passport; a friend having promised to travel night and day to bring it to her, as soon as it arrived. At every step of her journey she encountered fresh difficulties from the police, all of which it would be tedious to relate. Placards were put up in all the towns to keep a strict watch upon her as she passed through : this was the distinction the Austrians conferred upon a woman, who had done so much to give foreigners a respect for German literature, and German character.

In passing through Poland, Madame de Staël wished to rest a day or two at Lanzut, at the castle of the Polish Prince and Princess, Lubomirska, with whom she had been well acquainted in Geneva, and during her visit to Vienna. The captain of the police, jealous that she intended to excite the Poles to insurrection, sent a detachment to escort her into Lanzut, to follow her into

the castle, and not leave her until she quitted it. Accordingly the officer stationed himself at the supper-table of the Prince, and in the evening took occasion to observe to her son that he had orders to pass the night in her apartment, to prevent her holding communication with any one ; but that, out of respect to her, he should not do it. 'You may as well say that you will not do it, out of respect to yourself,' replied the young man : 'for if you dare to set foot within my mother's apartment, I will assuredly throw you out of the window.'

The escort of the police was particularly painful to Madame de Staël at this point of her journey. A description of M. de Rocca had been sent along the road, with orders to arrest him as a French officer ; although he had resigned his commission, and was disabled by his wound from doing military service. Had he been arrested, the forfeiture of his life would have been the consequence. He had therefore been obliged to separate from his wife, at a time when he felt most anxious to protect her ; and to travel alone under a borrowed name. It had been arranged that they should meet at Lanzut, from which place they hoped to be able to pass safely into Russia. Having arrived there before her, and not in the least suspecting that she would be guarded by the police, he eagerly came out to meet her, full of joy and confidence. The danger, to which he thus unconsciously exposed himself, made Madame de Staël pale with agony. She had scarcely time to give him an earnest signal to turn back. Had it not been for the generous presence of mind of a Polish gentleman, M. de Rocca would have been recognised and arrested.

The fugitive experienced the greatest friendship and hospitality from the Prince and Princess Lubormirska; but notwithstanding their urgent entreaties, she would not consent to encumber their house with such attendants as chose to follow her. After one night's rest, she departed for Russia, which she entered on the 14th of July. As she passed the boundary-line, she made a solemn oath never again to set foot in a country subjected in any degree to the Emperor Napoleon; though she says she felt some sad misgivings that the oath would never allow her to revisit her own beautiful and beloved France.

Madame de Staël staid but a brief space in Moscow; the flames and the French army followed close upon her footsteps.

At Petersburg she had several interviews with the Emperor Alexander, whose affairs were then at a most alarming crisis.* She remarks of Russia, 'The country appeared to me like an image of infinite space, and as if it would require an eternity to traverse it. The Sclavonian language is singularly echoing; there is something metallic about it; you would imagine you heard a bell striking, when the Russians pronounce certain letters of their alphabet.'

The nobility of Petersburg vied with each other in the attentions bestowed on Madame de Staël. At a dinner given in honor of her arrival, the following toast was proposed: 'Success to the arms of Russia against

* In a conversation concerning the structure of governments, Madame de Stael said to the Emperor, 'Sire, you are yourself a constitution for your country.' 'Then, madam, I am but a LUCKY ACCIDENT,' was his wise reply to her delicate and comprehensive flattery.

France.' The exile dearly loved her country, and her heart could not respond to the sentiment; 'Not against France!' she exclaimed; 'but against him who oppresses France.' The toast thus changed was repeated with great applause.

Although Madame de Staël found much in Russia to interest her, and was every where received with distinguished regard, she did not feel in perfect security; she could not look on the magnificent edifices of that splendid capital, without dismal forebodings, that he, whose power had overshadowed all the fair dwellings of Europe, would come to darken them also.

In September, she passed through Finland into Sweden. In Stockholm she published a work against Suicide, written before her flight from Coppet. The object of this Treatise is to show that the natural and proper effect of affliction is to elevate and purify the soul, instead of driving it to despair. She is said to have been induced to make this publication by the fear that she had, in some of her former writings, evinced too much admiration for the Stoic ideas of courage.

In Sweden, as in Russia, Madame de Staël was received with very marked respect. It was generally supposed that she exerted a powerful influence over Bernadotte, to induce him to resist the encroachments of Napoleon's ambition. If this be the case, she may be said to have fairly check-mated the Emperor with a king of his own making. Though Bernadotte had great respect for her opinions, she is said not to have been a favorite with him: he was himself fond of making eloquent speeches, and her conversation threw him into the shade.

Madame de Staël passed the winter of 1812 on the shores of the Baltic, and in the spring she sailed for England; where she arrived in June, 1813. Although her dramatic style of manners, and the energy of her conversation, formed a striking contrast to the national reserve of the English, she was received with enthusiastic admiration. Her genius, her fame, her escape from Bonaparte, and her intimate knowledge of the French Revolution, all combined to produce a prodigious sensation. 'In the immense crowds that collected to see her at the Marquis of Lansdowne's, and in the houses of the other principal nobility of London, the eagerness of curiosity broke through all restraint; the first ladies in the kingdom stood on chairs and tables, to catch a glimpse of her dark and brilliant physiognomy.'

Madame de Staël has left some admirable descriptions of English society, and of the impressions made upon her mind, when she first entered that powerful country. But the principal object of her visit was not to observe the intellectual wealth, or moral grandeur, of England. Through all her perils and wanderings she had saved a copy of her condemned book on Germany, and had brought it triumphantly to London, where it was published in October, 1813.

Mrs. Jameson, writing of this work in 1834, says: "I do not think the Germans themselves judge it fairly. Some speak of it as eloquent, but superficial; and among these is Jean Paul. Others denounce it altogether, as a work full of mistakes, and flippant, presumptuous criticism. Others again affect to speak of it, and of Madame de Staël herself, as things of another era, quite

gone by and forgotten. This appeared to me too ridiculous. They forget, or do not know, what *we* know, that her De l'Allemagne was the first book which awakened in France and England a lively and general interest in German art and literature. It is now five-and-twenty years since it was published. The march of opinion, and criticism, and knowledge of every kind, has been so rapid, that much has become old, which was then new. But this does not detract from its merit. Madame de Staël, with her lively egotism and Parisian volubility, stunned Schiller and teased Goethe. But while our estimate of *manner* is relative, our estimate of *character* should be positive. In manner, Madame de Staël was the French woman, accustomed to be the cynosure of a saloon; but she was not ridiculous or egoïste in character. She was, to use Schlegel's expression, '*une femme grande et magnanime jusque dans les replis de son ame*'—(a woman great and magnanimous even in the inmost recesses of her soul.) The best proof is the very spirit in which she viewed Germany, in spite of all her natural and national prejudices. Goethe did not like her; but he says, 'Whatever we may say or think of her, her visit was certainly followed by very important results. Her work upon Germany, which owed its rise to social conversations, is to be regarded as a mighty engine, which at once made a wide breach in that Chinese wall of antiquated prejudice which divides us from France; so that the people across the Rhine, and afterward across the channel, at length came to a nearer knowledge of us; whence we may look to obtain a living influence over the distant west.'

'In this, which is perhaps her greatest work, Madame

de Staël has endeavored to give a bold, general, and philosophical view of the whole intellectual condition of the German people, among whom she had made what was in some sort a voyage of discovery; for the highly original literature of that country was then little known to the rest of Europe.' It was received with great applause in England, and afterward in France, where a change of government admitted of its being published the ensuing year. Sir James Mackintosh immediately wrote a review of it, in which he says, 'The voice of Europe had already applauded the genius of a national painter in the author of Corinna. In her Germany, she throws off the aid of fiction; she delineates a less poetical character, and a country more interesting by anticipation than by recollection. But it is not the less certain that it is the most vigorous effort of her genius, and probably the most elaborate and masculine production of the faculties of woman.'

Simond says, 'The main defect in her mode of composition, perhaps the only one, is an excessive ambition of eloquence. The mind finds no rest anywhere; every sentence is replete with meaning, fully freighted with philosophy, and with wit, sometimes indeed over-laden; no careless expression ever escapes her; no redundancy amid so much exuberance. If you had to make an abstract of what she wrote, although you might wish to render it clearer and simpler, you would scarcely know what to strike off, or how to clothe the thoughts in more compendious language; so harmonious and so strong is hers. Yet she could compose in company, and write while conversing.'

But the fault most commonly found with Madame de Staël's books, and which will probably always prevent their being very popular with general readers, is obscurity. We never for a moment suspect her of vagueness; we know there *is* a meaning, when we cannot perceive it. As Lady Morgan says, 'There is in her compositions something of the Delphic priestess. They have the energy of inspiration, and the disorder. Sometimes mystic, not always intelligible, we still blame the *god* rather than the *oracle*, and wish she were less inspired, or we more intelligent.'

When Madame de Staël made her visit to England, Lord Byron was in the first lustre of his fame. He had not then sunk into that depth of moral degradation, which afterward made his genius the hot-breathing of a curse upon a world that worshipped him. At first, the rival lions seem to have been disposed to growl at each other. The following extracts from Byron's letters and journal give a vivid picture of the terms on which they stood:

ST. JAMES'S, JULY 8, 1813.

'Rogers is out of town with Madame de Staël, who hath published an essay against suicide, which, I presume, will make somebody shoot himself.'

JULY 13, 1813.

'P. S. The Staël last night attacked me most furiously — said that I had no right to make love — that I had used * * * barbarously — that I had no feeling, and was totally insensible to *la belle passion*, and had been all my life. I am very glad to hear it; but I did not know it before.'

While Madame de Staël was in England she was deeply afflicted by the news of the death of her youngest son. Byron alludes to this event in an off-hand style, and judges her by rules that apply remarkably well to his own character.

AUGUST 22, 1813.

'Madame de Staël Holstein has lost one of her young barons, who has been carbonadoed by a vile Teutonic adjutant—kilt and killed in a coffee-house at Scrawsenhawsen. Corinna is, of course, what all mothers must be,—but will, I venture to prophesy, do what few mothers could—write an essay upon it. She cannot exist without a grievance—and somebody to see or read how much grief becomes her. I have not seen her since the event; but merely judge (not very charitably) from prior observation.'

Nov. 16.

'To-day received Lord Jersey's invitation to Middleton—to travel sixty miles to meet Madame * * *! I once travelled three thousand to get among silent people; and this same lady writes octavos, and *talks* folios. I have read all her books—like most of them, and delight in the last; so I won't hear as well as read.'

Nov. 17.

'At Lord Holland's I was trying to recollect a *quotation* (as I think) of Staël's, from some Teutonic sophist about architecture. "Architecture reminds me of frozen music," says this Macaronico Tedescho.* It is somewhere—but where? The demon of perplexity must know, and won't tell. I asked M——, and he said it was not hers; but P——r said it must be *hers*, it was so *like*.'

* It is Goethe, who calls architecture "*eine erstarrte* musik."

Nov. 30.

'Received a very pretty billet from M. la Baronne de Staël Holstein. She is pleased to be much pleased with my mention of her last work in my notes.* I spoke as I thought—Her works are my delight, and so is she herself for—half an hour. She is a woman by herself, and has done more than all the rest of them together, intellectually. She ought to have been a man. She *flatters* me very prettily in her note; but I *know* it. The reason that adulation is not displeasing is, that, though untrue, it shows one to be of consequence enough, in one way or other, to induce people to lie, to make us their friend:—that is their concern.'

Dec. 5.

'Asked for Wednesday to dine at Lord Holland's and meet the Staël. Asked particularly, I believe, out of mischief to see the first interview after my answer to her note, with which Corinna professes herself to be so much taken. I don't much like it—she always talks of *myself*, or *herself*, and I am not (except in soliloquy, as now) much enamored of either subject—especially one's works. What the —— shall I say about Germany! I like it prodigiously. I read *her* again and again, and there can be no affectation in this; but unless I can twist my admiration into some fantastical expression, she won't believe me; and I know by experience I shall be overwhelmed with fine things about rhyme,' &c.

Dec. 7.

'This morning received a very pretty billet from the Staël, about meeting her at Lord Holland's to-morrow.

* Byron, in his notes to the Bride of Abydos, then just published, called her the first female writer of this, perhaps of any age.

I dare say she has written twenty such to different people, all equally flattering. So much the better for her, and for those who believe all she wishes them, or all they wish to believe. Her being pleased with my slight eulogy is to be accounted for in several ways. Firstly, all women like all or any praise; secondly, this was unexpected, because I have never courted her; thirdly, those who have all their lives long been praised by regular critics, like a little variety, and are glad when any one goes out of his way to say a civil thing; and fourthly, she is a very good-natured creature, which is the best reason, after all, and perhaps the only one.'

DEC. 10.

'Dined at Lord Holland's on Wednesday. The Staël was at the other end of the table, and less loquacious than heretofore. We are now very good friends; though she asked Lady Melbourne whether I really had any *bonhommie*. She might as well have asked that question before she told C. L. '*C'est un démon.*' True enough, but rather premature; for *she* could not have found it out.'

DEC. 12.

'All the world are to be at the Staël's to-night, and I am not sorry to escape any part of it. I only go out to get me a fresh appetite for being alone.'

JAN. 11, 1814.

TO MR. MURRAY.

'I do not love Madame de Staël, but depend upon it, she beats all your natives hollow, as an authoress; and I would not say this if I could help it.'

JAN. 16.

'Lewis has been squabbling with Madame de Staël

about Clarissa Harlowe, Mackintosh, and me. My homage has never been paid in that quarter, or we should have agreed still worse. I don't talk — I can't flatter — and I won't listen. Poor Corinne, she will find some of her fine speeches will not suit our fine ladies and gentlemen.'

FEB. 18, 1814.

'More notes from Madame de * * unanswered—and so they shall remain. I admire her abilities, but really her society is overwhelming—an avalanche that buries one in glittering nonsense—all snow and sophistry.'

MARCH 6.

'Dined with Rogers. Madame de Staël, Mackintosh, Sheridan, Erskine, &c. there. Sheridan told a very good story of himself and Madame Recamier's handkerchief. *She* says she is going to write a big book about England—I believe her. We got up from table too soon after the women; and Mrs. Corinne always lingers so long after dinner, that we wish her in—the drawing-room.'

JUNE 19, 1814.

'The Staël out-talked Whitbread, was *ironed* by Sheridan, confounded Sir Humphrey, and utterly perplexed your slave. The rest (great names in the red book, nevertheless) were mere segments of the circle. Mademoiselle —— * danced a Russ saraband with great vigor, grace, and expression.'

The respect and admiration with which Madame de Staël was received by the best society in England was rather increased than diminished during her residence

* Probably Mademoiselle de Stael, afterward Duchess de Broglie.

there. She had now been in most of the capitals of Europe, and in all of them had received a degree of homage never before paid to any woman who was not a queen. But all these flattering distinctions could not wean her affections from her beloved Paris. In the midst of the most dazzling triumphs of her genius, her heart turned fondly toward France, and she was watching with intense anxiety the progress of those great political movements, which afterward restored her to her country. Immediately after the entrance of the Allied Army into Paris, and the consequent abdication of Bonaparte, Madame de Staël returned to her native land. Notwithstanding the pain it gave her to see her country filled with foreign troops, she felt the joy of an exile restored to her home. She immediately resumed her high place in society; and the accumulation of fame she brought with her threw additional brilliancy around a name, which had so long been illustrious. Louis XVIII. took great delight in her conversation. He caused to be paid from the royal treasury the two millions of francs, that M. Necker had loaned to Louis XVI.

A circumstance, which occurred at this period of her life, is remarkably interesting. A project was on foot to assassinate Napoleon; and men were sent to Elba for that purpose. Madame de Staël, from her well-known dislike to the Emperor, and her acquaintance with political men of all parties, was the first one to whom the secret was confided. Accompanied by Talma, she immediately sought an interview with Joseph Bonaparte, informed him of his brother's danger, and even proposed to go to Elba in person. A patriotic friend, whose name is not yet revealed to the public, undertook the

hazardous mission — he arrived in time, so that the two first who landed were arrested, and Bonaparte was saved.

Madame de Staël passed the winters of 1814 and '15 in Paris, received the universal homage of the great men, then collected there from all parts of the world. But the shadow of her old and inveterate enemy was suddenly thrown across this bright spot in her existence. On the 6th of March, 1815, Bonaparte suddenly landed in France. When Madame de Staël heard the tidings, she says, it seemed as if the earth had yawned under her feet. She had sufficient knowledge of the French people to conjecture what reception Napoleon would meet; and having made a farewell visit to the king, with a heavy heart she returned to Coppet.

Bonaparte, anxious to rebuild the power his own madness had overthrown, was particularly desirous to gain the confidence of the friends of rational liberty; and among these his former persecution had shown of what consequence he considered Madame de Staël. He sent his brother Joseph with a request that she would come to Paris and give him her advice about framing a constitutional government. With a consistency very rare in those days of rapid political changes, she replied, 'Tell the Emperor that for twelve years he has done without me, or a constitution; and I believe that he has as little regard for the one as he has for the other.'

Bonaparte gave O'Meara a very different account. He says, 'I was obliged to banish Madame de Staël from court.* At Geneva she became very intimate with

* A gentle and comprehensive description of his system of petty persecutions!

my brother Joseph, whom she gained by her conversation and writings. When I returned from Elba she sent her son to ask payment of two millions, which her father had lent out of his private property to Louis XVI. and to offer her services provided I complied with her request. I refused to see him; thinking I could not grant what he wished without ill-treating others in a similar predicament. However, Joseph would not be refused, and brought him in; the attendants not liking to deny my brother. I received him politely, and told him I was very sorry I could not comply with his request, as it was contrary to the laws. Madame de Staël then wrote a long letter to Fouché, stating her claims, in which she said she wanted the money to portion her daughter in marriage to the Duc de Broglie, promising that if I complied with her request, I might command her and hers; that she *would be black and white for me.* Fouché urged me to comply, saying that at so critical a time she might be of considerable service. I answered that I would make no bargains.'

It is impossible that the above statement should be true. In the first place, we have more reason to place confidence in the veracity of the open-hearted Madame de Staël, than we have in the word of Napoleon, who seldom "used language for any other purpose than to *conceal* his thoughts"; secondly, in the beginning of his reign he did offer to pay those very two millions, if she would favor his government, and, at the very time of which O'Meara speaks, he again offered to do it; thirdly, it is notorious that after his return from Elba he was extremely anxious to conciliate his enemies; and lastly,

the history of his whole intriguing life makes us laugh at the pretence that he was incapable of making bargains.

At the close of the memorable Hundred Days, Bonaparte was a second time compelled to abdicate; and Madame de Staël would have immediately returned to Paris, had she not felt such a painful sense of degradation in seeing the throne of France supported by a standing army of foreign troops: her national pride could not brook the disgrace of witnessing her country in the leading-strings of the Allied Powers. France, thus situated, was in her eyes no longer 'the great nation.'

She remained at Coppet during the summer of 1815; but, having fresh cause of alarm for the health of her husband, who had never recovered from the effects of his wound, she revisited Italy, where they passed the winter. In the spring of 1816, they returned to Coppet.

Lord Byron, who had then left England, in high indignation at the odium he had brought upon himself, passed through Switzerland during this year, in his way to Italy. Notwithstanding his former want of cordiality toward Madame de Staël, and his personal unpopularity at this period, he was received by her with a kindness and hospitality, he had not hoped to meet, and which affected him deeply. With her usual frankness, she blamed him for his conduct to Lady Byron; and by her persuasive eloquence prevailed upon him to write to a friend in England expressing a wish to be reconciled to his wife. In the letters he wrote, during the few summer months he staid in Switzerland, he often speaks of Coppet and its inhabitants. He says,

'Madame de Staël wishes to see the Antiquary, and I am going to take it to her to-morrow. She has made Coppet as agreeable to me as society and talent can make any place on earth. Bonstetten is there a good deal. He is a fine, lively old man, and much esteemed by his compatriots. All there are well, excepting Rocca, who, I am sorry to say, looks in a very bad state of health. Schlegel is in high force, and Madame de Staël is as brilliant as ever. Of the Duchess de Broglie, Byron spoke in very high terms; and in noticing her attachment to her husband, he remarked, that 'Nothing was more pleasing than to see the development of the domestic affections in a very young woman.' What a pity that virtue was not to him something more than a mere abstract idea of poetic beauty!

When it became evident that the Allied Powers did not mean to dictate the measures of the French government, Madame de Staël was again strongly tempted by the allurements of Paris. She returned once more, to become the leading-star in the most brilliant society in the world. 'Every evening her saloon was crowded with all that was distinguished and powerful, not in France only, but in all Europe, which was then represented in Paris by a remarkable number of its most extraordinary men. Madame de Staël had, to a degree perhaps never possessed by any other person, the rare talent of uniting around her the most distinguished individuals of all the opposite parties, literary and political, and making them establish relations among themselves, which they could not afterward entirely shake off. There might be found Wellington and Lafayette, Chateaubriand, Talleyrand, and Prince Laval; Hum-

boldt and Blucher from Berlin ; Constant and Sismondi from Switzerland ; the two Schlegels from Hanover ; Canova from Italy ; the beautiful Madame Recamier, and the admirable Duchess de Duras : and from England such a multitude, that it seemed like a general emigration of British talent and rank.'

It was in conversation with men like these, that Madame de Staël shone in the fulness of her splendor. Much as we may admire her writings, in which she has so gracefully blended masculine vigor with female vivacity and enthusiasm, we cannot realize the vividness of her fame, like those who saw her genius flashing and sparkling in quick collision with kindred minds. In powers of conversation she was probably gifted beyond any other human being. Madame Tessé declared, ' if she were a queen, she would order Madame de Staël to talk to her always.'—Simond says, ' That ambition of eloquence, so conspicuous in her writings, was much less observable in her conversation ; there was more *abandon* in what she said, than in what she wrote ; while speaking, the spontaneous inspiration was no labor, but all pleasure ; conscious of extraordinary powers, she gave herself up to the present enjoyment of the good things, and the deep things, flowing in a full stream from her own well-stored and luxuriant fancy. The inspiration was pleasure — the pleasure was inspiration ; and without precisely intending it, she was, every evening of her life, in a circle of company, the very Corinne she had depicted. It must not, however, be supposed that, engrossed by her own self-gratification, Madame de Staël was inattentive to the feelings of others ; she listened very willingly, enjoyed, and applauded ; she

did more, often provoking a reply, and endeavoring to place her hearers in a situation to have their turn. "What do *you* think?' she would say with eager good-nature, in the very middle of her triumph, that you also might have yours. Upon the whole, Madame de Staël's *bon-hommie* was still more striking than her talents. Madame de Saussure tells us that 'no one could understand the full measure of her power, except those who knew her in the intimacy of friendship. Her most beautiful writings, her most eloquent remarks in society, were far from equalling the fascination of her conversation, when she threw off the constraint of conforming to various characters, and talked unreservedly to one she loved. She then gave herself up to an inspiration, which seemed to exercise as supernatural an effect upon herself, as it did upon others. Whether the power was exerted for good or evil, it seemed to come from a source over which she had no control. Sometimes, in the bitterness of her spirit, she at one breath withered all the flowers of life, and probing the heart with red-hot iron, destroyed all the illusions of sentiment, all the charm of the dearest relations. Presently, she would yield to the control of gayety, singularly original in its character: it had all the graceful candor and winning credulity of a little child, who is a dupe to everything. Then she would abandon herself to a sublime melancholy, a religious fervor, acknowledging the utter emptiness of all this world can bestow.'

The winter months, at the close of 1816, and the beginning of 1817, were passed by Madame de Staël in Paris. This was the most splendid scene in the gorgeous drama of her life—and it was the last. 'The great

exertions she made, evening after evening, in the important political discussions that were carried on in her saloon,—the labors of the morning in writing almost continually something suited to the wants of the moment, for the Mercury, and other periodicals,—while at the same time, the serious labor of her great work on the French Revolution was still pressing on her,—all these together were too much for her strength.' Contrary to the advice of the physicians, she persisted in using opium, to which she had for some time resorted to stimulate her exhausted frame; but nature was worn out, and no artificial means could restore its vigor. A violent fever, obviously the effect of the excitement under which she had so long lived, seized her in February. By the use of excessively violent means, it was thrown off; but though the disease was gone, her constitution was broken up. Life passed at first insensibly from the extremities, and then no less slowly retired from the more vital organs. In general, she suffered little, and her faculties remained in unclouded brightness to the last. The interest excited by her situation proved the affection she had inspired, and of what consequence her life was accounted to her country. Every day some of the royal family were anxiously inquiring at the door, and every day the Duke of Wellington came in person to ask if there was no hope. Her most intimate friends were admitted into her sick chamber. She conversed upon all the subjects that were introduced, and took an interest in them all. If her conversation at this period had less than her usual animation, it is said to have had more of richness and depth. The deadly paleness of her features formed a touching con-

trast with the dazzling intelligence, which never deserted her expressive countenance. Her friends placed a double value on every remark she uttered, and treasured it in their inmost hearts, as one of the last efforts of her wonderful mind. Some of them indulged the hope that she might recover; but she knew from the first that the work of death was begun. At one time, owing to a high nervous excitement, produced by the progress of her disease, the thought of dissolution was terrible to her. She mourned over the talent that had made her life so brilliant; over the rank and influence, that she could so usefully exercise; over her children, whose success in the world was just then beginning to gratify all her affection and pride; until those who listened to her trembled at the heart-rending energy, which excited imagination gave to her expressions. But this passed away with the disease that produced it; and calmer feelings followed. She spoke of her death with composure and resignation to all except her daughter. 'My father is waiting for me in the other world,' said she, 'and I shall soon go to him.' By a great effort she wrote, with her palsied hand, a few affectionate words of farewell to her most intimate friends. Two days before her death, she read Lord Byron's Manfred, then just published; and expressed as clear and distinct an opinion on its poetry as she would have done at any moment of her life. The morning before she died, she pointed to these two beautiful passages, and said they expressed all she then felt:

"Lo! the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been passed—now wither!"

* * * * * * * *

"Oh, that I were
The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment— born and dying
With the blest tone, which made me!"

'Late that night, as her daughter was kneeling by her bedside, she tried to speak to her of her approaching dissolution; but the last agony of a mother's heart came over her, and she could not: she asked her to go into the next room, and then she became calm again. Miss Randall, her long-known and affectionate friend, whom she had always wished to have with her at the last moment, remained alone with her until morning. Once, as she revived from a temporary state of insensibility, she said, "I believe I can realize what it is to pass from life to death; our ideas are confused, and we do not suffer intensely. I am sure the goodness of God will render the transition easy." Her hopes were not disappointed. At about two o'clock she fell asleep; and so tranquil was this last slumber, that it was only when at four o'clock she ceased to breathe, without any movement, or change of feature, that it became too certain she would wake no more. She died on Monday, July 14, 1817, at the age of fifty-one.' Her remains were carried to Coppet, and placed, as she had desired, by the side of her father.

During her life-time, she had caused a beautiful bas-relief to be placed upon his monument. It represented a light celestial form, extending her hand to another figure, who looks back with compassion upon a young female, veiled and prostrate before a tomb. Under these emblems are represented Madame Necker, her husband,

and their daughter; the two first passing from this world to immortal life.

M. de Rocca, whose fragile health had so often made Madame de Staël tremble for a life on which she leaned all her hopes, while her own existence was in the fulness of its vigor, was destined to survive her; but grief soon finished the work which illness had begun. He went to linger out his few brief days under the beautiful sky of Provence, where a brother received his last sigh. He expired in the night of the 29th or 30th of January, 1818, in his thirty-first year. Their only child was confided to the affectionate care of the Duchess de Broglie.

Simond, in his tour through Switzerland, visited Coppet, soon after the death of Madame de Staël. He pays the following tribute to her memory: 'Death has disarmed her numerous political enemies; and the tongue of slander is silent. Her warm, generous, forgiving temper, her romantic enthusiasm, her unrivalled powers of conversation, her genius, are alone remembered.—The place of this extraordinary woman is marked among the most eloquent writers of any age; among the best delineators of human feelings and passions; among the truest historians of the heart. She might not possess much positive knowledge; sometimes she spoke of things she did not thoroughly understand; her imagination often took the lead of her judgment; but her errors were invariably on the generous side, and still bespoke greatness of mind and elevated sentiment.'

When Madame de Staël made a final arrangement of her affairs, a short time before her decease, she requested her children to declare her second marriage, and to

publish her great work on the French Revolution, although she had not been able to complete it. The idea of finishing this book had been a favorite project, of which she had never lost sight from the time of her father's death, until the near approach of her own. Her first effort is to vindicate M. Necker's memory from the aspersions cast upon it by his enemies ; and to prove that his political conduct was ever influenced by the purest, most patriotic, and most consistent motives. She had remarkable opportunities for obtaining full and accurate information concerning the startling scenes of the French Revolution, and the causes which produced them ; and in describing them, she has singularly combined the animated and fervid eloquence of an eye-witness, with the calmness and candor of an historian. The impartiality with which she speaks of Bonaparte, after all she had suffered from him, shows that she possessed true greatness of soul. Indeed, a forgiving temper was one of Madame de Staël's prevailing characteristics. No injuries could excite her to revenge ; she resented for a moment, but she never hated. She was so fearful of being ungenerous, that she was less likely to speak ill of her enemies, for the very reason that they were her enemies. There was but one offence, which she never pardoned, and that was a disrespectful word of her father. In such cases, she never resorted to retaliation ; but she maintained toward the individual a perpetual coldness and reserve.

The envious and frivolous Madame de Genlis, who, to considerable talent united an excessive vanity, was always attacking her distinguished rival with bitter criticisms and sarcastic remarks ; but Madame de Staël

was never provoked to retort by an unkind word ; she praised her when she could, and when she could not, she was silent. When Madame de Genlis, at last, spoke unfavorably of Madame Necker, she exclaimed, ' Does she suppose, because I do not return her attacks upon myself, that I will not defend my mother! Madame de Genlis may say what she will of my writings ; and for myself, she may either love or fear me. But I will defend my dead mother, who has nobody else in the world to take her part. True, she loved my father better than she did me — and by that I know that I have all her blood in my veins ; as long as that blood circulates, she shall not be attacked with impunity.' Her friends represented to her that, as she was then exiled and persecuted, attacks on those she loved would only be multiplied by taking notice of them ; and her indignation subsided as rapidly as it had arisen.

The fragments of the journal she kept after she left France have been published by her son and the Duc de Broglie, under the title of the Ten Years' Exile of Madame de Staël. It is astonishing that she was able to observe so much of the countries through which she passed with rapidity and fear, on her way to England.

Madame de Staël wrote the articles Aspasia, Camoëns, and Cleopatra, for La Biographie Universelle. Her works were all collected and published in one edition by her children ; accompanied by a notice of her life and writings, by Madame Necker de Saussure.

Such was the life of Madame de Staël — which through its whole course, more resembled a long continued and brilliant triumph than the ordinary lot of mortals. Yet none of us would wish such a destiny for a

sister, or a child. She herself had suffered so keenly from the envy and evil feelings which always darken the bright path of genius, that she exhorted her daughter not to follow in her footsteps. She talked freely to her children of the dangers into which she had been led by her active imagination and ardent feelings: she often quoted her motto to Delphine, 'A man ought to know how to brave the opinion of the world; a woman should submit to it.' In the present state of society, it is undoubtedly true that a woman *suffers* much more than a man, if she does not submit to the opinions of the world.

Mrs. Jameson, who visited Coppet several years after, thus describes her visit: "The Duchess de Broglie being absent, we had an opportunity of seeing the chateau. All things 'were there of her'—of her, whose genuine worth excused, whose all-commanding talents threw into shade those failings which belonged to the weakness of her sex, and her warm feelings and imagination. The servant girl, who showed us the apartments, had been fifteen years in Madame de Staël's service. All the servants had remained long in the family, "Elle était si bonne et si charmante maitresse!" A picture of Madame de Staël, when young, gave me the idea of a fine countenance and figure, though the features were irregular. In the bust, the expression is not so prepossessing; *there* the color and brilliance of her splendid dark eyes, the finest feature of her face, are of course quite lost. The bust of M. Rocca, by Christian Friederich Tieck, was standing in the Baron de Staël's dressing-room. I was more struck with it than anything I saw, not only as a chef-d'œuvre,

but from the perfect and regular beauty of the head, and the charm of the expression. It was just such a mouth as we might suppose to have uttered his well-known reply, "*Je l'aimerai tellement, qu'elle finira par m'aimer.*" Madame de Staël had a son by this marriage, who had just been brought home by his brother, the Baron, from a school in the neighborhood. He is about seven years old. If we may believe the servant, Madame de Staël did not acknowledge this son till just before her death; and she described the wonder of the boy on being brought home to the chateau, and desired to call the Baron, 'Auguste' and 'mon frère.'

Madame de Staël, with all her errors, deserves our highest respect and admiration. Her defects, whether as an author or a woman, always sprung from the excess of something good. Everything in her character tended to extremes. She had an expansive freedom, a mighty energy of soul, which never found room enough in this small world of ours. Her spirit was impatient within the narrow bounds of time and space, and was forever aspiring to something above the destiny of mortals.

If we are disposed to blame her eagerness for all kinds of distinction, we must remember that her ambitious parents educated her for display, and that she was endowed with genius which made every effort a victory. If there is something to forgive, there is more to admire; and few will censure her, if none speak harshly but those who have had equal temptations. The most partial cannot deny that she had many faults; but they are so consecrated by unrivalled genius, by kindness, disinterestedness, and candor, that we are willing to let the veil of

oblivion rest upon them forever, and to remember only that no woman was ever gifted with a clearer head, or a better heart.

LIST OF WORKS USED IN THE COMPILATION.

MS. Lectures on French Literature, by Professor Ticknor.
Notice sur le Caractère et les Ecrits de Madame de Staël, par Madame Necker de Saussure.
La Biographie Universelle.
Simond's Tour in Switzerland.
Sir John Sinclair's Correspondence.
Memoirs and Correspondence of Baron de Grimm.
Ten Years' Exile of Madame de Staël.
Considerations on the French Revolution, by Madame de Staël.
Moore's Life of Byron.
Lavalette's Memoirs.
Sir Walter Scott's Life of Napoleon.
O'Meara's Voice from St. Helena.
Edinburgh Review.
Monthly Anthology.
Encyclopædia Americana.
Goëthe's Correspondence with a Child.
Mrs. Jameson's Sketches.

MADAME ROLAND.

'O, Liberté, que de crimes on commet en ton nom!'

MANON-JEANNE PHLIPON, afterward Madame Roland, was born at Paris, in 1754. Her father was an engraver, not particularly distinguished in his art. He seems to have been a common-place character, fond of money, and vain of his superficial acquaintance with the fine arts. His daughter tells us that 'though he trafficked with tradesmen, he formed connexions only with artists. He could not be said to be a virtuous man, but he had a great deal of what is called honor. He had no objection to selling a thing for more than it was worth, but he would have killed himself rather than not pay the stipulated price of what he had agreed to purchase.'

M. Phlipon married a very beautiful woman, with small fortune, but greatly his superior in intelligence and dignity of character. They had seven children; of whom Manon-Jeanne was the second; all the others died in infancy. After being two years with a faithful nurse in the country, watched over by a very devoted

god-mother, Mademoiselle Phlipon was brought home to her father's. Her gentle and discreet mother soon gained an ascendency over her youthful mind, which she never lost.

At two years' old, she describes herself as a 'little brunette, whose dark hair played gracefully on a face animated by a blooming complexion.' The young lady was full of spirits, active, and not a little obstinate; yet Madame Phlipon had never occasion to punish her in any other way than by fixing her eye sternly upon her, and gravely saying, '*Mademoiselle!*'

Madame Roland, while writing her Memoirs, during the last days of her life, says — 'I still feel the impression made upon me by her look; I still hear, with a beating heart, the word *Mademoiselle* substituted, with heart-rending dignity, for the kind name of daughter, or the elegant appellation of Manon. Yes, *Manon!** I am sorry for the lovers of romance: there is certainly nothing noble in the name, nor is it at all suited to a heroine of the lofty kind; but as an historian, I cannot disguise the truth. The most fastidious would have become reconciled to the sound of this name, could they have seen my mother, and heard it pronounced in her soft, affectionate tone.'

But though thus easily swayed by Madame Phlipon, the child often rebelled against the imperious orders of her father, and would never readily submit to anything of which she did not perceive the reason. Anything like coercion made her as furious as a lion. Several times, she bit her father, while he was whipping her. When about six years old, it was one day necessary for

* Synonymous with *Molly*.

her to take some nauseous medicine. At her mother's solicitation, she several times attempted to drink it, but turned away her head with loathing. Her father came in, and threatened her with the rod. This roused the native stubbornness of her character; and from that moment she determined she would not try to do as they wished. After a severe whipping, she attempted to throw the physic away. Her father, being very angry, a second time punished her still more severely. A violent uproar succeeded; but the child was not subdued. Her father then promised her a third, and still more cruel whipping. Her cries and sobs suddenly ceased — calmly and firmly, she pushed the cup from her, and offered herself to the rod, determined to die rather than submit. In relating this scene, she speaks of it as the first development of that heroic fortitude, which supported her through the horrors of the French Revolution. Her mother was, of course, dreadfully agitated: having persuaded her husband to leave the room, she put the little girl to bed, and left her, without saying a word. When the child had rested two hours, she returned, and, with tears in her eyes, entreated her to take the medicine, without occasioning her any further vexation; the little girl, melted by her gentleness, looked steadily in her face, and swallowed it at a single draught.

From that time, her father never undertook to punish her. He adopted his wife's system of mildness and reason, and tried to gain his daughter's affections by walking with her, teaching her to draw, and entering into kind conversations with her.

Being the only child of parents in easy circumstances,

Mademoiselle Phlipon received a more careful education than was usually bestowed upon young ladies of her class in life. Her bright and active mind made rapid progress in every thing she undertook. At four years old, she read so well that no further trouble was required, except to supply her with books enough. A prize obtained from the priest, to whom she said her Sunday lessons, seems to have given an early impulse to her ambition. Indeed it is evident that, from her infancy, she was considered, both by herself and her parents, as a very extraordinary little personage. She says, 'I learned everything it was thought proper to give me. I should have repeated the Koran, had I been taught to read it. I shall always remember a painter named Guibol, whose panegyric on Poussin obtained a prize from the Academy at Rouen. He frequently came to my father's; and being a merry fellow, he told me many extravagant tales, which amused me exceedingly; nor was he less diverted in making me display my slender stock of knowledge in return. I think I see him now, with a figure bordering on the grotesque, sitting in an arm-chair, taking me between his knees, on which I rested my elbows, and making me repeat the *Athanasian Creed*; then rewarding my compliance with the story of *Tanger*, whose nose was so long, that he was obliged, when he walked, to twist it round his arm: this is not the most absurd contrast that might be exhibited.' Masters were employed to instruct her in writing, geography, music, and dancing; and a maternal uncle, who was an ecclesiastic, complied with her earnest request to teach her Latin. Such was her quickness of apprehension, and her eagerness to learn, that

every new subject of study was a feast to her. She used to rise at five o'clock in the morning, when every one else in the house was asleep, and steal softly to a corner of her mother's chamber, where her books were deposited ; and there she studied and copied her lessons with such assiduity, that everybody was astonished at the progress she made. She says, ' My masters consequently became more affectionate ; gave me longer lessons ; and took such an interest in my instruction as excited me to new efforts. I never had a master, who did not appear as much flattered by teaching me, as I was grateful for being taught ; or one who, after attending me a year or two, was not the first to say that his instructions were no longer necessary — that he ought no longer to be paid, but should be glad of permission to visit my parents, in order to converse with me sometimes.

Mademoiselle Phlipon did not get along so fast in her Latin, as in her other studies ; because her uncle Bimont was a social, merry priest, who much preferred a frolic with his lively little niece, to hearing her decline nouns and conjugate verbs. However, to the imperfect knowledge she obtained from him, she attributes the singular facility she afterward had in acquiring other languages. She says, ' My studies completely occupied my days, which always seemed too short ; for I could never get through all I was inclined to undertake. I soon exhausted all the books the small family library contained. I devoured every volume, and began the same over again, when no new ones were to be obtained. Two folio Lives of the Saints, an old version of the Bible, a translation of Appian's Civil Wars, and a descrip-

tion of Turkey, written in a wretched style, I read over and over again. I also found the Comical Romance of Scarron; some collections of pretended bon mots, on which I did not bestow a second perusal; the Memoirs of the brave de Pontis, which diverted me much; those of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, whose pride did not displease me; and several other antiquated works, the contents, binding, and spots of which I have still before my eyes. Indeed, the passion for learning possessed me to such a degree, that having picked up a treatise on the art of Heraldry, I set myself instantly to study it. It had colored plates, with which I was diverted, and was glad to know the names of all the little figures they contained. My father was astonished when I gave him a specimen of my science, by making some remarks on a seal, that was not engraved according to the rules of art. On this subject I became his oracle, nor did I ever mislead him. I also endeavored to learn a short Treatise on Contracts, which fell into my hands; but it tired me so soon, that I did not get to the fourth chapter. In searching the house, I found a recess in my father's work-shop, where one of the young men in his employ kept his books. This discovery furnished me with a store of reading. I carried off a volume at a time to devour in my little closet, taking great care to put it in place as soon as I had done. In this way I read a great many volumes of Travels, of which I was passionately fond; some Plays, of second-rate authors; and Dacier's Plutarch. This last was more to my taste, than any thing I had seen; not even excepting pathetic stories, which always affected me powerfully. Plutarch seemed to be exactly the intellectual food that suited me; I

shall never forget the Lent of 1763, at which time I was nine years of age, when I carried it to church instead of the Exercise for the Holy Week. From that period, I may date the impressions and ideas which rendered me a republican without my ever dreaming of becoming one. I actually wept because I was not born a Spartan or a Roman!'

About the same time she became captivated with the writings of Tasso and Fenelon; some passages of which excited and agitated her so much, that she says she would have plucked out her tongue rather than have attempted to read them aloud. Her father, wishing to foster her propensity for serious studies, gave her Fenelon on female education, and Locke on the education of children in general. These books, intended for mature minds, would not have been read by many girls of her age; but Mademoiselle Phlipon appears to have read them to some purpose, deriving from them habits of thought and self-examination.

She received instructions in engraving, as well as drawing; and during childhood, her birth-day presents to relatives usually consisted of some pretty head drawn by herself, or a flower neatly engraved on copper, with a compliment written beneath. These things, however, were merely intended as innocent and delightful resources, during the many lonely hours, which the destiny of woman almost always imposes upon her. Her judicious mother did not wish to see her entirely engrossed in such employments, even for the sake of great excellence; for she was aware that she should not contribute to her daughter's happiness, or usefulness, by making her an artist.

With regard to dress, Madam Phlipon did as the parents of an only child are too apt to do. Madame Roland says, 'In her own dress she was plain, sometimes even negligent; but I was her doll, and it was her great delight to see me fine. From my infancy I was dressed with a degree of elegance, that seemed unsuitable to my condition. The young ladies of that period wore long trains to their robes, which swept the pavement as they walked. These trains were trimmed according to the taste of the wearer. Mine were of fine silk, of some simple pattern and modest color, but in price and quality equal to my mother's best gala suits. My toilette was a grievous business. My hair was papered and frizzed, and tortured with hot irons, and other barbarous implements used at that time, until my sufferings actually forced the tears from my eyes. Considering the retired life I led, some will ask for whose eyes all this finery was intended? It is true, that my mother was almost always at home, and received very little company. Two days in the week, however, we always went abroad; once to visit my father's relations, and once, which was on Sunday, to see my grandmother Bimont, to go to church, and to take a walk. My grandmother was a handsome woman, who at an early age had suffered an attack of the palsy, from which her understanding had sustained a permanent injury. From that time she had gradually declined into a state of dotage; spending her days in her easy-chair, either at the window or the fire-side, according to the season. An old servant, who had been forty years in the family, regularly gave me my afternoon's repast, as soon as I entered. When that was over, I grew dreadfully tired of the

visit. I sought for books, but could find none except the Psalter ; and for want of better employment I read the French, and chanted the Latin, twenty times over. When I was gay, my grandmother would often weep, uttering grievous cries, that frightened and distressed me ; and if I fell down, or hurt myself in any way, she would laugh aloud. It was in vain to tell me all this was the effect of her disease ; I did not find it any more agreeable on that account. My mother considered it a sacred duty to pass two hours listening to the old servant's garrulity. This was a painful exercise to my patience ; but I was forced to submit to it. One day, when I cried for vexation, and begged to go away, my mother, as a punishment, staid the whole evening. She took proper occasions to impress it upon my mind that her assiduous attention to a helpless parent was a sacred and becoming duty, in which it was honorable for me to participate. I know not how she managed it, but my heart received the lesson with emotion.

' Beside these regular family-visits, there were others paid on great occasions, such as new-year's day, weddings, christenings, &c. which afforded sufficient opportunities for the gratification of vanity. Those acquainted with the manners of what was then called the *bourgeoisie* of Paris, will know that there were thousands of them, whose expense in dress (by no means inconsiderable) had no other object, than an exhibition of a few hours, on Sunday, in the *Tuileries* ; to which their wives joined the display of their finery at church, and the pleasure of parading their own quarter of the town, before their admiring neighbors.

'But my education afforded many strong contrasts. The young lady elegantly dressed for exhibition at church and in the public walks on Sunday, and whose manners and language were perfectly consistent with her appearance, could nevertheless go to market with her mother in a linen frock, or step into the street alone, to buy a salad, which the servant had forgotten. It is true, I was not much pleased with these commissions; but I showed no signs of dislike. I behaved with so much civility, yet with so much dignity, that the shopkeepers always took pleasure in serving me first; yet those who came before me were never offended. I was sure to pick up some compliment or other in the way, which only served to make me more polite. The same child, who read systematic works, who could explain the circles of the celestial sphere, who could handle the crayon and the graver, and who at eight years of age was the best dancer in the youthful parties, was frequently called into the kitchen to make an omelet, pick herbs, or skim the pot. This mixture of serious studies, agreeable relaxations, and domestic cares, was rendered pleasant by my mother's good management, and fitted me for everything: it seemed to forebode the vicissitudes of my future life, and enabled me to bear them. In every place I am at home: I can prepare my own dinner with as much address as Philopœmen cut wood; but no one seeing me thus engaged would think it an office, in which I *ought* to be employed.'

Madame Phlipon was a pious woman, and of course earnestly endeavored to instil religious feelings into the mind of her child. These maternal instructions, rendered doubly impressive by the solemn ritual of the

Catholic church, soon kindled her ardent nature into a blaze of enthusiasm. She read with avidity the explanations of the church ceremonies, and treasured up their mystic signification in her memory. Again and again she studied the Lives of the Saints, and regretted those happy days when the persecuting fury of paganism conferred the crown of martyrdom upon courageous christians. Her active imagination invested the solitude and silence of the cloister with everything grand and romantic. Before she experienced this state of mind, the idea of leaving her mother had been extremely painful to her; the least mention of it drew forth a flood of tears. Her friends, being aware of this feeling, would sometimes amuse themselves by talking of the propriety of sending young ladies to a convent for a few years; and smile to observe the sudden clouds, which quick sensibility would spread over her expressive countenance. But now the state of things was quite different; all her thoughts were occupied with the idea of withdrawing from the world and its pleasures. One evening, being alone with her parents, she fell at their feet, and with a torrent of tears besought them to send her to a convent, that she might prepare for her first communion in a frame of mind suitable to the solemnity of the occasion. This request affected her parents deeply, and was immediately complied with.

After some inquiries into the character of the numerous convents, Mademoiselle Phlipon was conducted to the Sisterhood of the Congregation, in the Rue Neuve St Etienne. She says, 'While pressing my dear mother in my arms, at the moment of parting with her for the first time in my life, I thought my heart would have

burst; but I was acting in obedience to the voice of God, and passed the threshold of the cloister, tearfully offering up to him the greatest sacrifice I was capable of making. This was on the seventh of May, 1765, when I was eleven years and two months old.'

'In the gloom of a prison, in the midst of political storms, which ravage my country, and sweep away all that is dear to me, how shall I recall to my mind and how describe the rapture and tranquillity I enjoyed at this period of my life! What lively colors can express the soft emotions of a young heart endued with tenderness and sensibility, greedy of happiness, beginning to be alive to the beauties of nature, and perceiving the Deity alone! The first night I spent at the convent was a night of agitation. I was no longer under the paternal roof. I was at a distance from that kind mother, who was doubtless thinking of me with affectionate emotion. A dim light diffused itself through the room in which I had been put to bed, with four children of my own age. I stole softly from my couch, and drew near the window, the light of the moon enabling me to distinguish the garden, which it overlooked. The deepest silence prevailed around, and I listened to it, if I may use the expression, with a sort of respect. Lofty trees cast their gigantic shadows along the ground, and promised a secure asylum to peaceful meditation. I lifted up my eyes to the heavens; they were unclouded and serene. I imagined that I felt the presence of the Deity smiling on my sacrifice, and already offering me a reward in the consolatory hope of a celestial abode. Tears of delight flowed down my cheeks. I repeated my vows with holy

ecstasy, and went to bed again to taste the slumber of the elect.

As it was evening when I came to the convent, I had not yet seen all my fellow boarders. 'Thirty-four were assembled in one school-room. They were from the age of six to that of eighteen; the older and the younger being divided into separate classes. There was so much of the little woman about me, that it was immediately judged proper to include me with the elder set. I accordingly became the twelfth at their table, and found myself the youngest of them all. My correct mode of speaking, the sedate air which had become habitual, and the tone of politeness rendered familiar to me by my mother's manner, bore very little resemblance to the noisy mirth of my thoughtless companions. I inspired the children with confidence, because I never gave them a rude answer; and the older girls treated me with respect because my seriousness procured particular attention from the nuns, while it did not lessen my desire to oblige them. Educated as I had hitherto been, it was not surprising that I was better informed than most of my class, though the youngest of them all. The nuns perceived they could derive honor from my education without taking any pains to continue it. I became the favorite of the whole sisterhood; it was quite a matter of contention who should caress and compliment me. In addition to the convent studies, I still received lessons in music and drawing. The regularity of a life filled up with such a variety of studies was well suited to the activity of my mind, and to my natural taste for method and application. I was one of the first at every thing; yet I always had leisure, because I was diligent,

and did not lose a moment of my time. In the hours set apart for recreation, I felt no desire to run and play with the crowd, but retired to some solitary spot to read and meditate. With what delight was I filled by the beauty of the foliage, and the fragrance of the flowers, Everywhere I perceived the hand of Deity !

'A novice took the veil soon after my arrival at the convent. I still feel the agitation which her slightly tremulous voice excited in my bosom, when she melodiously chanted the customary verse, '*Here have I chosen my abode, and will establish it forever!*' I can repeat the notes as accurately as if I had heard them yesterday; and happy should I be, if I could chant them in America ! Oh God ! with what emphasis should I utter them now !* .

'When the novice, after pronouncing her vows, was covered with a pall, under which one might have supposed her to have been buried, I was no longer myself — I was the very victim of the sacrifice. I thought they were tearing me from my mother, and shed torrents of tears.

'With sensibility like this, which renders impressions so profound, existence never grows languid. I have never found mine a burden, even in the midst of the severest trials; and though not yet forty, I have lived to a prodigious age, if life be measured by the sentiment that has marked every moment of its duration.

'I received my first communion at the festival of the Assumption, soon after I was placed at the convent. Prepared by all the customary means, by retirement,

* It will be recollected that Madame Roland wrote her memoirs in prison, during the reign of Robespierre.

long prayers, silence, and meditation, I considered it as a solemn engagement, and the pledge of eternal felicity. It excited my imagination, and softened my heart to such a degree, that, bathed in tears, and enraptured with divine love, I was incapable of walking to the altar without the assistance of a nun, who took me under both arms, and bore me to the sacred table. These demonstrations of a feeling entirely unaffected procured me great consideration, and all the good old women I met were sure to recommend themselves to my prayers.'

During her residence in the convent, her parents came every Sabbath to walk with her in the Jardin du Roi. Although very happy among her young companions, she never parted from her mother without tears. 'Yet,' she says, 'I returned from these excursions with pleasure to the silent cloisters, and walked through them with measured step, the better to enjoy their solitude. Sometimes I would stop at a tomb, on which the eulogy of a pious maiden was engraved. 'She is happy,' said I to myself, with a sigh. And then a melancholy, not without its charms, would take possession of my soul, and make me long to be received into the bosom of the Deity, where I hoped to find that perfect felicity, of which I felt the want.'

She remained with the nuns a year; during which time she formed an intimate friendship with Sophia Cannet, whose family were allied to the nobility; this friendship continued through her life; and she attributes her facility in writing to the constant correspondence which she maintained with this young lady, after their separation. Another friendship, equally perma-

nent, existed between her and a nun, many years her senior, called Saint Agatha.

At the time Mademoiselle Phlipon left this peaceful retreat, her father was engaged in parish affairs, that called him much from home ; and her mother, being obliged to superintend his business, could not watch over her daughter so continually as she deemed necessary ; it was therefore decided that she should reside for a time with her grandmother Phlipon, and her great-aunt Angelica.

Her paternal grandmother was a graceful, lady-like matron, who thought a great deal of outward elegance, and refinement of manner ; aunt Angelica was meek, affectionate, and pious. With these good old relatives Mademoiselle Phlipon passed her thirteenth year, secluded from all intercourse with the world, save an occasional visit to her mother, or to her friends at the convent.

An anecdote, which she relates at this time, serves to show how early her republican mind began to be troubled by any assumption of superiority in rank. ' My grandmother one day took it in her head to visit Madame de Boismorel, with whom she was remotely connected, and whose children she had partly educated. Great were the preparations in consequence ; and tedious was the business of dressing, which began at break of day. On entering the mansion, all the servants, beginning with the porter, saluted Madame Phlipon with an air of respect and affection. She answered every one in the kindest and most dignified manner ; so far, all went well. But she could not deny herself the pleasure of pointing out her grand-daughter ; and the servants must

needs pay fine compliments to the young lady. I had an uncomfortable feeling, for which I could not account; but which I perceived to proceed, in part, from the idea that servants might look at, and admire me, but that it was not their business to pay me compliments.* We were announced by a tall footman, and walked into the parlor, where we found Madame de Boismorel seated upon an ottoman, embroidering with great gravity. Her dress bespoke less taste than desire to display her opulence, and indicate her rank; while her countenance, far from expressing any wish to please, announced her claims to respect, and the consciousness of her merit. Rouge, an inch thick, gave her unmeaning eyes a much more unfeeling look than was necessary to make me fix mine upon the ground. "A, Mademoiselle Rotisset! good morning to you!" cried Madame de Boismorel, in a loud and frigid tone, while rising to receive us. ("So my grandmother is called *Mademoiselle*, in this house," thought I to myself.) "I am very glad to see you, indeed. And who is this fine girl? Your grand-daughter, I suppose? She promises to make a pretty woman. Come here, my dear. She is a little bashful. How old is your grand-daughter, Mademoiselle Rotisset? She is a little brown, to be sure? but her skin is clear, and will grow fairer a year or two hence. She is quite the woman already. I will lay my life, that hand must be a lucky one. Did you ever venture in the lottery, my dear?" "Never, madam; I am not fond of gaming." "What an admirable voice! So sweet, and yet so full-toned! But how grave she is! Pray, my

* Like many republicans of maturer years, she seems, at this period, to have been anxious to level *down* to herself, but not to level *up*.

dear, are you not a little of the devotee?" "I know my duty to God, and I endeavor to fulfil it." "That's a good girl. You wish to take the veil, don't you?" "I do not know what will be my destination; nor do I at present seek to conjecture it." "Very sententious, indeed! Your grand-daughter reads a great deal, does she not, Mademoiselle Rotisset?" "Reading, madam, is her greatest delight." "Ay, ay, I see how it is; but have a care she does not turn author; that would be a pity indeed." The ladies then began to talk of the health and the follies of their family connexions. I took a survey of the apartment, the decorations of which pleased me much more than the lady to whom they belonged. My blood circulated more rapidly than usual, my cheeks glowed, and my little heart was all of a flutter. I did not yet ask myself why *my grandmother* was not seated on the ottoman, and why Madame de Boismorel was not playing the humble part of my aunt Angelica; but I had the feelings, which natufally lead to such reflections.'

After a year's residence with her grandmother, she returned home. She says, 'It was not without regret that I left the handsome streets of the *Isle St Louis*, the pleasant quays, and the tranquil banks of the Seine, where I was accustomed to take the air with my aunt Angelica, in the serene summer evenings. Along those quays I used to pass, without meeting a single object to interrupt my meditations, when, in the fervency of my zeal, I repaired to the temple to pour out my whole soul at the foot of the altar.' Notwithstanding my love for my mother, I took leave of my aged relatives with a flood of tears. My grandmother's

gayety had given a charm to her quiet residence, in which I had passed so many happy days. I was still going to reside upon the banks of the Seine ; but the situation of my father's house was not solitary and peaceful, like that of his mother. The moving picture of the *Pont Neuf* varied the scene every moment ; and literally, as well as figuratively, I entered the world, when I returned to my paternal roof. A free air and an unconfined space still, however, gave scope to my romantic imagination. How many times have I contemplated with tears of delight the vast expanse of heaven, and its azure dome, designed with so much grandeur, stretching from the gray east beyond the *Pont-au-Change* to the trees of the mall, and the houses of Chaillot, resplendent with the setting sun ! I know not if sensibility give a more vivid hue to every object, or if certain situations, which do not appear very remarkable, contribute powerfully to develope it, or if both be not reciprocally cause and effect ; but, when I review the events of my life, I find it difficult to assign to circumstances, or to my disposition, that variety, and that plenitude of affection, which have so strongly marked every point of its duration, and left me so clear a remembrance of every place at which I have been.'

Her passion for reading continued unabated ; and she seems to have been allowed to indulge it without control, or guidance. As her father's library was very limited, she was obliged to borrow and hire books ; the necessity of returning them soon led to the habit of making copious extracts, and of forming abstracts of what she had read ; thus, as is often the case, privation became a blessing. The Abbé le Jay, with whom her uncle Bi-

mont boarded, gave her the free use of his library, which proved a great resource for her during his life-time; a period of about three years. One of his brothers having ruined himself, the Abbé lost his senses, and died in consequence of a fall from his window. Mademoiselle d'Hannaches, a relative who had superintended his house for many years, went to board with Madame Phlipon after his death. Madame Roland says, 'This lady was tall, dry and sallow; with a shrill voice; proud of her descent; and tiring everybody with her economy and her pedigree. While she was accommodated in my mother's house, she was involved in an intricate law-suit concerning her inheritance. I was her secretary. I wrote her letters, copied her dear genealogy, drew up the petitions, which she presented to the president and the attorney-general of the parliament, and sometimes accompanied her when she went to make interest with persons of consequence. I easily perceived that, notwithstanding her ignorance, her stiff demeanor, her bad way of expressing herself, and her other absurdities, respect was paid to her origin. The names of her ancestors (which she never failed to repeat) were attended to, and great pains were taken to obtain what she desired. I compared the honorable reception she met with, to that given me, when I went with my grandmother to visit Madame de Boismorel—a visit which had left a deep impression on my mind. I could not help feeling my superiority over Mademoiselle d'Hannaches, who, with her genealogy, and at the age of forty, was unable to write a line of common sense, or even a legible hand; and it appeared to me that the world was extremely unjust, and the institutions of society highly absurd.'

Her independent feelings seem to have been still more goaded by occasional visits to the family of Lamotte, connexions of her friend, Sophia Cannet. Proud, stupid, and intolerant, the various members of this family could not forbear making a show of condescension in admitting the daughter of an artisan to their acquaintance ; a condescension which aroused her proud and ambitious nature to feelings of contempt, perhaps not unmixed with bitterness. She says, ' The opulent M. Cannet, seeing the success of a tragedy written by his kinsman Belloy, and calculating the profits, exclaimed, in sober sadness, " Why did not my father teach me to compose tragedies ! *I could have worked upon them on Sundays and holidays !*" Yet these wealthy blockheads, these pitiful possessors of purchased nobility, these impertinent soldiers, these wretched magistrates, considered themselves as the props of civil society, and actually enjoyed privileges, which merit could not obtain.

'I compared these absurdities of human arrogance with the pictures of Pope, tracing its effects in the artisan, as proud of his leather apron as the king of his crown. I endeavored to think, with him, that every thing was right; but my pride told me things were ordered better in a republic. No doubt our situation in life has a great influence on our characters and opinions ; but in the education I received, and in the ideas I acquired by study, and by observation of the world, everything seemed to combine to inspire me with republican enthusiasm, by making me perceive the folly, or feel the injustice, of a multitude of privileges and distinctions. In all my readings, I took the side of the champions of equality. I was Agis and Cleomenes at

Sparta; the Gracchi at Rome; and like Cornelia, I should have reproached my sons with being called nothing but the mother-in-law of Scipio. I retired with the plebeians to the Aventine hill; and gave my vote to the tribunes. Now that experience has taught me to appreciate every thing impartially, I see in the enterprise of the Gracchi, and in the conduct of the tribunes, crimes and mischiefs, of which I was not at the time sufficiently aware.

'When I happened to be present at any of the great sights of the Capital, such as the entry of the Queen, the Princesses, &c. I compared with grief this Asiatic luxury and insolent pomp, with the abject misery of the debased populace, who prostrated themselves before idols of their own making, and foolishly applauded the ostentatious splendor, which they paid for by depriving themselves of the necessaries of life. I was not insensible to the effect of magnificence; but I felt indignant at its being intended to set off a few individuals, already too powerful, though in themselves deserving little regard.

'When my mother took me to Versailles, to show me the pageantry of the court, I liked better to look at the statues in the gardens, than at the great personages in the palace; and when she asked me if I were pleased with the excursion, I replied, 'Yes, if it terminate speedily; but if we stay here a few days longer, I shall so perfectly detest the people I see, that I shall not know what to do with my hatred." "Why," said she, "what harm do they do you?"—"They give me the feeling of injustice, and oblige me every moment to contemplate absurdity".'

'It filled me with surprise and indignation to hear

people talk about the dissolute conduct of the court during the last years of Louis XV. and of the immorality which pervaded all ranks of the nation. Not perceiving as yet the germs of a revolution, I asked how things could exist in such a state. History taught me that the corruption of empires was always a prelude of decline; and when I heard the French nation laughing and singing at its own misfortunes, I felt that our neighbors were right in regarding us as children. I became familiar with the English constitution, and strongly attached to English literature, though I at present knew it only through the medium of translations. I sighed at the recollection of Athens, where I could have enjoyed the fine arts, without being annoyed by the sight of despotism. I was out of all patience at being a Frenchwoman. Enchanted with the golden period of the Grecian republic, I passed over the storms by which it had been agitated; I forgot the exile of Aristides, the death of Socrates, and the condemnation of Phocion. I little thought that heaven reserved me to be a witness of similar errors, to profess the same principles, and to participate in the glory of the same persecutions.

A little anecdote, which Madame Roland relates, serves to show how her observing mind learned a lesson from the most trivial occurrences, and how adroitly she made them bear upon her favorite theories. Being extremely fond of rural scenery, she persuaded her father to make excursions into the country on Sunday afternoons, instead of his usual walks in the *Bois de Boulogne*, or the gardens of *St Cloud*. On some occasions, they remained in the country until the next day. One

night her father attempted to draw the curtains of his bed perfectly close, and pulled the strings so hard, that the tester fell down upon him, and covered him so completely that he could not move. The landlady, being called, was greatly astonished, and exclaimed with much simplicity, 'Goodness! How could this happen! It is seventeen years since the bed was put up; and in all that time it has never budged an inch.' Madame Roland says, 'The logic of our hostess made me laugh more than the fall of the tester. Often afterward, when I heard political arguments, I used to whisper to my mother. 'This is as good reasoning, as that the bed ought not to have given way, when it had remained undisturbed for seventeen years.'

Her intellect, ever restless, and confident in its own energies, began to employ itself in a less profitable manner than idolizing the ancients, and fashioning imaginary republics. While residing with her grandmother, she read some of the controversial writings of Bossuet, and learned the arguments of unbelievers by his attempts to refute them. From that time she began to make religion a matter of speculation rather than of feeling.

> 'Our meddling intellect
> Misshapes the beauteous forms of things
> We *murder* to *dissect*.'

With cold and arrogant reason for her guide, she passed, through various states of mind, into the dark and comfortless regions of utter scepticism.

The ardor of her character was such, that she always identified herself with the persons or parties of which she read. Thus when she first entered upon religious

controversy, she became enamored with the austerity of the Jansenists, because her frank temper could not abide the evasive and flexible faith of the Jesuits. When she studied Descartes and Malebranche, she considered her kitten merely as a piece of animated mechanism performing its movements. When she became acquainted with the ancient sects of philosophy, she persuaded herself that she was a Stoic; and tried various experiments to prove her contempt for suffering. Succeeding years brought before her notice the wild and wicked systems, which the French dignified with the title of Philosophy, at the period when Anarchy was baptized with the blood of Liberty and took her name. Thus the influences around Madame Roland served to increase her darkness. She became a Deist; and *sometimes* shared the Atheist's incredulity. I presume no one was ever able to be *always* an Atheist. Reason, — bewildered at her own work, and frightened at her utter loneliness, — still tries to grasp at some shadow of belief, even if it be as indefinite as a '*Principle of Agency.*' In vain have systems of philosophy been based upon the utter selfishness of mankind, in vain have they ridiculed our hopes of immortality. There is that within the human heart, — and it comes directly from God, — which will not suffer us *always* to disbelieve in better influences than mere self-love, and in holier aspirations than the cravings of appetite. Men cannot live among their fellow-beings and doubt the existence of human virtue; though perchance they may choose to call it a 'sublime instinct.' The fables and absurd ceremonies, with which the church of Rome had become loaded in the course of centuries, no doubt had their share in disturbing the early faith of

Madame Roland; but it is equally true that had she kept her heart in all humility, false doctrines, whether they took the name of philosophy or of religion, would have had no power to mislead her. She says, 'In my infancy, I necessarily embraced the creed that was offered me; it was mine until my mind was sufficiently enlightened to examine it; but even then all my actions were in strict conformity with its precepts. *I was astonished at the levity of those, who, professing a similar faith, acted in a different way.*

'I attended church, because I would not for the world afflict my mother; and even after her death I continued to do so, for the edification of my neighbor and the good of society. Divine service, if performed with solemnity, affords me pleasure. I forget the quackery of priests, their ridiculous fables and absurd mysteries — and see nothing but weak mortals assembled together to implore the aid of the Supreme Being. If I did not carry to church the tender piety of former days, I at least maintained as much decency and attention. I did not indeed follow the priest in his recital of the service; but I read some christian work. I always retained a great liking for St Augustine. Assuredly there are fathers of the church, whom a person may peruse with delight, without being a bigoted Christian — there is food in them both for the heart and the mind.'

It is evident that the remains of her early piety never left her entirely. Her guardian angels lingered around her, and she could not wholly shut out from her soul the light in which they dwelt. She says, 'It seemed to me as if I was dissecting nature, and robbing it of all its charms. Can the sublime idea of a Divine Creator,

whose Providence watches over the world, and the immortality of the soul, that consolatory hope of persecuted virtue, — can these be nothing more than splendid chimeras? In how much obscurity are these difficult problems involved! What accumulated objections arise when we wish to examine them with mathematical rigor! But why should the man of sensibility repine at not being able to demonstrate what he feels to be true? In the silence of the closet, and the dryness of discussion I can agree with the atheist, or the materialist; but when I contemplate nature, my soul, full of emotion, soars aloft to the vivifying principle that animates creation, to the almighty intellect that pervades it, to the goodness that makes it so delightful to our senses! And now, when immense walls separate me from all I love, I see the reward of mortal sacrifices beyond the limits of this life. How? In what manner? I cannot say — I only *feel* that so it must be.

'I have sometimes been overcome with emotion while my heart exalted itself to that supreme intelligence, that first cause, that gracious providence, that principle of thought and of sentiment, which it felt the necessity of believing and of acknowledging. 'O Thou, who hast placed me on the earth, enable me to fulfil my destination in the manner most conformable to the divine will, and most beneficial to my fellow-creatures.' This unaffected prayer, as simple as the heart that dictated it, has become my only one; never have the doubts of philosophy, or the excitements of the world, been able to dry up its source. Amid the tumults of society, and in the depth of a dungeon, I have pronounced it with equal fervor. In the most brilliant circumstances of my life I

uttered it with transport ; and in fetters I repeat it with resignation.'

These expressions plainly show that Madame Roland's heart was not irreligious, whatever doubts might trouble her intellect.

Madame Roland did not entertain the common, but very erroneous idea, that when she left school, education was completed. After her return home, she continued to read and study, and never neglected an opportunity of learning anything. The various kinds of needlework, taught her by her grandmother, served to amuse the long evenings, during which her mother usually read aloud; the advantage of this custom was doubled by her constant habit of writing down, every morning, those passages or thoughts, which had struck her most forcibly the evening preceding. For some time, she continued to take lessons in music and dancing. Her father tried to persuade her to give some attention to engraving. He offered to share the profits, according to a book he wished her to keep ; but from a dislike of mercenary motives, or a want of interest in the employment, she soon threw aside the graver in disgust. She says, ' Nothing was so insipid to me as to engrave the edge of a watch-case, or to ornament a bauble ; and I cared less about money to buy ribands, than time to read good authors.'

Geometry became her favorite study, and for a time she applied herself to it with much industry ; but when she came to algebra, she soon grew weary ; and her husband could never persuade her that there was any thing attractive in reasoning by X and Y. For want of other books she studied several works on agriculture

and economy, because she could never be easy unless she was learning something. These habits, so different from those of her young companions, of course excited many remarks. Some called her a prodigy, others a pedant; and her parents were again and again warned of the danger of her becoming a blue-stocking. An intelligent traveller, who visited at her father's, used to say, in a prophetic tone, 'You may do what you will to avoid it, Mademoiselle; but you will certainly write a book.' To which she would reply, 'Then it shall be under another name; for I would sooner cut off my fingers, than become an author.'

She says, 'I was fond of rendering an account of my own ideas to myself, and the intervention of my pen assisted me in putting them in order. When I did not employ it, I was rather lost in reveries than engaged in meditation; but with my pen I kept my imagination within bounds, and pursued a regular chain of reasoning. Before I was twenty years old, I had begun to make some collections, which I have since augmented, and entitled The Works of Leisure Hours, and Various Reflections. I had nothing further in view than to have witnesses of my sentiments, which, on some future day, I might confront with one another, so that their gradations, or their changes, might serve at once as a lesson and a record. I have a pretty large packet of these juvenile works piled up in the dusty corner of my library, or perhaps in the garret. Never, however, did I feel the smallest temptation to become an author. At a very early period, I perceived that a woman who acquires the title loses far more than she gains. She forfeits the affection of the male sex, and provokes the criticism of her

own. If her works be bad, she is justly ridiculed; if good, her right to them is disputed; or if envy be compelled to acknowledge the best part to be her own, her talents, her morals, and her manners, are scrutinized so severely, that the reputation of her genius is fully counterbalanced by the publicity given to her defects. Besides, happiness was my chief concern; and I never knew the public intermeddle with the happiness of any individual, without marring it. I know of nothing so agreeable as to be rated at our full worth by the people with whom we live; nor anything so empty as the admiration of a few persons whom we are never likely to meet again. I know not what I might have become under the hands of a skilful preceptor. By applying diligently to some particular study, I might have extended some branch of science, or have acquired talents of a superior kind. But should I have been better or more useful? I leave others to resolve the question; certain it is, I could not have been more happy. I know of nothing to be compared to that plenitude of life, of tranquillity, of satisfaction, which I enjoyed in those days of innocence and study.'

The following account gives us reason to suppose that her vanity was not wounded by her father's appreciation of her talents: 'As long as the fine weather lasted, we went on holidays to the public walks; and my father regularly carried me to the exhibitions of the fine arts, so frequent at Paris in those days of luxury, then called prosperity. He enjoyed himself much on these occasions, when he had it in his power to make an agreeable display of his superiority, by pointing out to my observation what he understood better than I; and he was as

proud of the taste I discovered, as if it were his own work. That was our point of contact — in those cases we were truly in unison. My father never lost an opportunity of showing himself to advantage; and he was evidently fond of being seen in public with a well-dressed young woman, whose blooming appearance frequently produced a murmur of admiration grateful to his ears. If any one accosted him, doubtful of the relation in which we stood to each other, he would say, 'My daughter' — with an air of modest triumph, which affected me, without making me vain, for I ascribed it entirely to parental affection. If I spoke, he looked around to watch the effect of my voice, or of the good sense I might have uttered, and seemed to ask if he had not reason to be proud. I was sensible of these things; and they sometimes made me more timid, without producing any awkward feeling; it seemed incumbent upon me to make amends for my father's pride by my own modesty.'

In the following account of her person the fear of imputed vanity seems to have been no restraint upon entire frankness: 'At fourteen years of age, I had attained my full height. My stature was five feet and nearly four inches, English measure. My constitution was as vigorous as that of a prize-fighter; my carriage was firm and graceful; and my walk was light and quick. My face had nothing striking in it, except a great deal of color, and much softness and expression. On examining each feature, it might be asked, "Where is the beauty?" Not a single one is regular, and yet all please. My mouth is a little wide, — you may see prettier every day, — but you will see none with a smile more tender or engaging. My eyes are not very large,

and the color of the iris is hazel; they are sufficiently prominent, and are crowned with well-arched eyebrows, which, like my hair, are of a dark brown. My look is frank, animated, and tender, varying in its expression, like the affectionate heart of which it indicates the movements: serious and lofty, it sometimes astonishes; but it charms much more, and never fails to keep attention awake. My nose gave me some uneasiness — I thought it a little too full at the end; but taken with the rest, especially in profile, the effect is not amiss. My forehead, broad and high, — with the hair retiring, supported by a very elevated orbit of the eye, and marked by veins in the form of a r, that dilated on the slightest emotion, — was far from making such an insignificant figure, as it does in many faces. My complexion was rather clear than fair; and the freshness of my color was frequently heightened by the sudden flush of a rapid circulation, excited by the most irritable nerves. I had a smooth skin, a well-turned arm, and a hand which, without being small, is elegant, because its long, taper fingers give it grace, and indicate address. My teeth are white and regular; and I had the plumpness of perfect health. Such are the gifts, with which nature had endowed me. I have lost many of them; particularly the fulness of my form, and the bloom of my complexion; but those which remain still hide five or six years of my age, without any assistance from art; people who are in the daily habit of seeing me will hardly believe me to be more than two or three and thirty. It is only since my beauty began to fade, that I know what was its extent; while in its freshness, I was unconscious of its value, which was probably augment-

ed by my ignorance. I do not regret its loss, because I have never abused it; but I certainly should not be sorry, provided my duty could be reconciled with my inclination, to turn the portion that remains to better account than my present situation admits. My portrait has been frequently drawn, painted, and engraved; but none of these imitations gives a correct idea of my person.* My likeness is very hard to hit, because the expression of my soul is more strongly marked than the lines of my countenance. An artist of common abilities cannot represent this; possibly he does not even see it. My face acquires animation in proportion to the interest with which I am inspired, in the same manner as my mind is developed in proportion to the minds with which I communicate. I am so stupid with some people, that, upon perceiving my readiness with people of wit, I have thought, in the simplicity of my heart, that I was indebted to their cleverness. I generally please, because I am fearful of offending; but it is not given to all to find me handsome, or to discover what I am worth. I can suppose that an old coxcomb, enamored of himself, and vain of displaying the slender stock of science he has been so long acquiring, might be in the habit of seeing me for ten years without suspecting I could do more than cast up a bill, or cut out a shirt. It was not without reason that Camille Desmoulins was astonished that "*at my age, and with so little beauty,*" I still had what he calls adorers. I never spoke to him in my life; but it is probable that, with a personage of his stamp, I should be cold and silent, if not absolutely repulsive. He was wrong in supposing me to hold a

* The cameo of Langlois is said to have been least defective.

court. I hate gallants, as much as I despise slaves; and I know perfectly well how to get rid of a flatterer. What I want is esteem and good will; admire me afterward, if you please; but esteem and affection I must have, at any rate: this seldom fails with those who see me often, and who at the same time possess a heart and a sound understanding.

My earnest desire to please, combined with my youthful bashfulness and the austerity of my principles, diffused a peculiar charm over my person and manner: nothing could be more decent than my garb, or more modest than my deportment; though I aspired to nothing beyond neatness in my dress, the greatest commendations were bestowed upon my good taste.'

She informs us that suitors came in crowds, like bees around a newly-expanded flower, and says, 'I shall describe the rising of my lovers *en masse*, as is proper in these days when everything is done *en masse*.' Her Spanish music-master, her dancing-master (an ugly little Savoyard), three jewellers, and two young advocates, were all rejected. She came very near marrying a physician, strongly recommended by her friends. It is no wonder that instances of domestic virtue and happiness were rare in a country in which matrimonial engagements were managed as she describes. She says, 'The pecuniary arrangements were made before I knew anything of the matter, and the *bargain* was absolutely concluded when I first heard that a physician had entered the lists. The profession did not displease me; it promised an enlightened mind; but it was necessary to become acquainted with his person. We met for the first time, accidentally, as I supposed, at a house where

we had taken shelter from the rain. My cousin, who had first projected the match, was with us. She assumed an air of triumph, as if she would have said, 'I did not tell you she was handsome ; but what do you think of her ?' My good mother looked kind and pensive. Our hostess was equally profuse of her wit and confectionery. The physician chattered away, and made great havoc among the sugar-plums ; saying, with a sort of school-boy gallantry, that he was very fond of everything sweet; upon which the young lady observed with a soft voice, a blush, and a half smile, that the men were accused of loving sweet things, because it was necessary to make use of great sweetness in dealing with them. The cunning doctor was quite tickled with the epigram. My father would willingly have given us his benediction on the spot, and was so polite that I was out of all patience with him. The doctor retired first, to pay his evening visits ; we returned as we came , and this was called an *interview*. My cousin, a strict observer of punctilios, so ordered it because, forsooth, a man, who has views of marriage, ought never to set his foot in a private house, where there is a daughter, until his proposals are accepted ; but when once that is done, the marriage articles are to be signed directly, and the wedding to follow immediately. The doctor, in the habiliments of his profession, did not please me ; I never, at any period of my life, could figure to myself such a thing as love in a periwig. My mother urged me to decide at once. " What !" I exclaimed, " on the strength of a single interview ?" " Not exactly that," she replied ; " M. de Gardanne's intimacy with our

family enables us to judge of his conduct and way of life ; and, by means of a little inquiry, we shall easily come at a knowledge of his disposition. These are the principal points. The sight of the person is of very little consequence. You have attained the proper age to settle in the world ; you have refused many offers from tradesmen, and they are the class of people from whom your situation makes it most likely that offers will come. You seem determined never to marry a man in business. The present match is suitable in every external point of view. Take care not to reject it too lightly."' Thus urged, Mademoiselle consented to see the doctor at her father's house ; determined, however, in her own mind that no power on earth should make her marry him, unless she liked him. Luckily, she was saved all further trouble by a dispute between her lover and his intended father-in-law.

M. Phlipon thought more of money than any other consideration ; he was anxious that his daughter should marry a thriving man of business. She exclaimed, 'Have I then lived with Plutarch, and all the other philosophers, to no better purpose than to connect myself for life with a shopkeeper, incapable of seeing anything in the same light as myself! Tell me, papa, why you suffered me to contract habits of study ! I know not whom I shall marry ; but it must be one who can share my thoughts, and sympathize with my pursuits.' He replied, 'There are men of business possessed of politeness and information.' 'That may be ; but it is not of the kind I want.' 'Do you not suppose that M—— and his wife are happy ? They have just retired from business, keep an excetlent house, and receive the best of

company.' 'I am no judge of other people's happiness; but my own affections are not fixed upon riches. I conceive, that the strictest union of hearts is requisite to conjugal felicity. I cannot connect myself with a man who does not resemble me. My husband must be my superior; since both nature and the laws give him the pre-eminence, I should be ashamed of him if he did not really deserve it.' 'I suppose you want a Counsellor. But women are not generally happy with those learned gentlemen. They have a great deal of pride, and very little money.' 'Papa, I do not care about such or such a profession. I wish to marry a man I can love.'—— 'But you persist in thinking such a man will never be found in trade. It is however a pleasant thing for a woman to sit at ease in her own apartment, while her husband is carrying on a lucrative trade. Now, there's Madame Dargens—she understands diamonds as well as her husband. She can make good bargains in his absence, and could carry on all his business perfectly well, if she were left a widow. You are intelligent; and you understand that branch of business, since you studied the treatise on precious stones. You might do whatever you please. A happy life you would have had, if you could but have fancied Delorme, Dabrieul, or——' 'Hark ye, papa, I have discovered that the only way to make a fortune in trade is by selling dear what has been bought cheap; by overcharging the customer and beating down the poor workman. I could never descend to such practices; nor could I respect a man, who made them his occupation from morning till night.' 'Do you then suppose there are no honest tradesmen?' 'I presume there are; but the number is

not large; and among them I am not likely to find a husband, who will sympathize with me.' 'And what will you do, if you do not find the idol of your imagination?' 'I will live single.' 'Perhaps that will not be so pleasant as you imagine. There is time enough yet, to be sure; but *ennui* will come at last; the crowd of lovers will be gone by; and, you know the fable.'— 'Oh, I would take my revenge by deserving happiness from the very injustice that would deprive me of it.'— 'Now you are in the clouds again. It is very pleasant to soar to such a height; but it is not easy to keep the elevation.'

Not long after this conversation, a circumstance occurred, which gave her father a pleasant opportunity of humbling what he considered her romantic ideas. I will relate it in her own words: 'I have already said that my judicious mother wished me to be as much at home in the kitchen as in the drawing room; and at market as in the public walk. After my return from the convent, I often used to accompany her when she went out to purchase household articles; and as I grew older, she sometimes sent me on such errands, attended by a maid. The butcher, with whom she dealt, had lost a second wife; and found himself, while still in the prime of life, possessed of fifty thousand crowns. I was ignorant of all these particulars. I only perceived that I was well served, and with abundant civility; and was much surprised at seeing this personage frequently appear on Sunday in a handsome suit of black, with lace ruffles, in the same walk with ourselves, and put himself in my mother's way; to whom he always made a low bow without accosting her. This practice continu-

ed a whole summer. I fell sick; and every morning the butcher sent to inquire what we wanted, and to offer any accommodation in his power. These pointed attentions began to provoke my father's smiles. Wishing to divert himself, he one day introduced me to a woman, who came to demand my hand in the butcher's name. "You know, daughter," said he with great gravity, "that I make it a rule to lay no constraint upon your inclinations. I shall therefore only state to you a proposal, in which you are principally concerned." A little vexed that my father's good-humor should turn over to me the task of giving an answer, which he ought to have taken upon himself, I screwed up my mouth to parody his mode of expression. "You know, papa," I replied, "that I am very happy in my present situation, and resolved not to quit it for some years to come. You may take any steps you think proper in conformity to this resolution." As I said this, I withdrew.

'The respectable character of my mother, the appearance of some fortune, and my being an only child, made the project of matrimony a tempting one to a number of persons, who were strangers to me. The greater part, finding it difficult to obtain an introduction, adopted the expedient of writing to my parents. These letters were always shown to me. My first opinion was always grounded upon the character of the epistles, without any regard to the statements they contained of the writer's rank and fortune. I wrote the answers to these letters, which my father faithfully copied. When writing was in question, he was as tractable as a child, and sat down to transcribe without the least reluctance.

I was much amused at the idea of acting the papa. I discussed my own interests with all the gravity suitable to the occasion, and in a style of prudence truly parental. I caused my suitors to be dismissed with dignity, without giving room for resentment or hope. Where there was not a large fortune, either possessed or expected, my father easily approved of my refusal; but where one of those requisites was found, he was much concerned at my rejection of the proffered advantage.—Here began to break out those dissensions between my father and me, which continued ever after. He loved and respected commerce, because he regarded it as the source of riches; I detested and despised it, because I considered it as the foundation for avarice and fraud.

'My mother's health began to decline insensibly. She had a stroke of the palsy, which they tried to make me believe was the rheumatism. Serious and taciturn, she every day lost a portion of her vivacity, and grew more fond of secluding herself from the world. She often lamented that I could not prevail on myself to accept any of the offers I received. One day in particular, she urged me, with melancholy earnestness, to marry an honest jeweller, who solicited my hand. "He has in his favor," said she, "great reputation for integrity, sobriety, and mildness of disposition. He has an easy fortune, which may become brilliant; and that circumstance makes part of the merit of a man, who is not remarkable for his personal advantages. He knows that yours is not a common mind. He professes great esteem for you; and will no doubt be proud of following your advice. You might lead him in any way you like." "But, mamma, I do not want a husband who is

to be led ; he would be too cumbersome a child for me to take care of."—" Do you know that you are a very whimsical girl ? You would not like a master."—" I certainly should not like to have a man give himself airs of authority, because that would only teach me to resist; but I am sure I should not like a husband whom it would be necessary to govern ; I should be ashamed of my own power."—" I understand, you would like to have a man think himself the master, while he obeyed you in every thing."—" No, it is not that, either. I hate servitude, but empire would only embarrass me. I wish to gain the affections of a man, who would make his happiness consist in contributing to mine in the way that his good sense and regard for me might dictate."—" My daughter, there would hardly be such a thing in the world as a happy couple, if happiness could not exist without such a perfect conformity of taste and opinions as you imagine."—" I do not know of a single one whose happiness I envy."—" But among those matches you do not envy, there may be some preferable to always living single. I may be called out of the world sooner than you imagine. Your father is still young ; and you cannot imagine all the disagreeable things my fondness for you makes me fear. How happy should I be, could I see you united to an honest man, before I depart this life !"

' The idea of such an event struck me with terror. I had never thought of losing my mother — a shivering seized my whole frame — and as she tried to smile at my wild and eager gaze, I burst into a flood of tears. " Do not be alarmed," said she tenderly ; " I am not dangerously ill ; but in taking our resolutions, we ought to calculate all possible chances. A worthy man offers

you his hand; you are turned of twenty, and cannot expect so many suitors as you have had for the last five years; I may be suddenly snatched from you; do not then reject a husband, who, it is true, has not all the refinement you wish, but who will love you, and with whom you can be happy." "Yes, mamma," said I, with a deep sigh, "as happy as *you* have been." My mother was disconcerted; she made me no reply; nor did she ever after open her lips to urge me on the subject of my marriage. The remark escaped me as the expression of an acute feeling will sometimes escape us, before we take time to reflect; the effect it produced convinced me it was too true.

'A stranger might have perceived, at the first glance, that there was a great difference between my father and mother; but even I had never fully calculated all she must have suffered. Accustomed to profound peace in the house, I could not judge the painful efforts it must sometimes have cost her to maintain it. My father loved his wife, and was tenderly fond of me. Not even a look of discontent ever broke in upon the good humor of my mother. When she was not of her husband's opinion and could not prevail upon him to modify it, she always yielded her own without the least appearance of reluctance. It was only during the latter years of her life, that feeling myself hurt by my father's mode of reasoning, I sometimes took the liberty to interfere in the discussion. By degrees, I gained a certain sort of ascendence, and availed myself of it with considerable freedom. Whether it were the novelty of my enterprise that confounded him, or whether it were weakness, I knew not; but my father yielded to me more readily than to

his wife. I always exerted my influence in her defence, and might not unaptly have been termed my mother's watch-dog. It was no longer safe to molest her in my presence; either by barking, or by pulling the skirt of the coat, or by showing my teeth in good earnest, I was sure to make the assailant let go his hold. But when we were alone, not a word was ever said, by either of us, inconsistent with the most perfect respect. For her sake, I could enter the lists even against her husband; but when that husband was absent, he was no longer anything but my father, about whom we were both silent, unless there was something to praise. I could perceive, however, that by degrees he lost his industry. Ambition is generally fatal to all classes of men; multitudes become its victims where one is crowned with success. My father was happy and prosperous, while he was satisfied with moderate gains; but the desire of making a fortune engaged him in speculations quite foreign to his profession; and that desire made him set everything at hazard. Parish business was the first thing that called him from home; and sauntering abroad afterward became a passion. All public spectacles, and everything that was passing out of doors, attracted his attention; connexions at the coffee-house led him elsewhere; and the lottery held out temptations he could not resist. In proportion as his art was less exercised, his talents diminished; his sight grew weak, and his hand lost its steadiness. These changes took place by degrees. My mother grew very pensive, and could not always conceal her anxiety. I forebore speaking of what neither she nor I could prevent. I was careful to procure her every satisfaction that depended upon me.

I sometimes consented to leave her, in order to persuade my father to walk with me. He no longer sought to have me with him ; but he still took pleasure in attending me. I used to bring him back, in a sort of triumph, to that excellent mother, whose tender emotions I could easily perceive, whenever she saw us both together. We were not always gainers by it; for my father, that he might neither refuse his daughter, nor be disappointed of his pleasures, would first see me safe home, and then go out again, for an instant, as he said ; but he would forget the hour, and not return until midnight ; in the meantime we had been weeping in silence.'

This was a sad prospect for a wife and mother, sinking into the tomb faster than her anxious daughter was aware of. Just before Whitsuntide, 1775, it was agreed that the family should take one of their customary excursions into the country. Mademoiselle Phlipon was troubled with a broken and uneasy sleep, during which she had an ill-omened dream, that seems to have made an impression on her mind quite inconsistent with the scepticism she professed. She thought she was returning to Paris in the midst of a storm ; and that, upon getting out of the boat, a corpse impeded her way. Terrified at the sight, she was endeavoring to ascertain whose body it could be ; when her mother laid her hand lightly upon her, and in her soft voice reminded her that it was time to rise for their excursion. The sleeper awoke much agitated ; and embraced her mother as fervently, as if she had rescued her from some real danger. The weather was fine, the little boat carried them safely to the place of destination, and the quiet of the rural scenery soon restored serenity to her mind.

Her mother was better for the journey, and resumed something of her former activity. Mademoiselle Phlipon had promised her friend Agatha that she would visit the convent. Her mother intended to accompany her; but being fatigued with previous exertion, she changed her mind at the moment of starting, and proposed to send the maid with her. Her daughter then wished to stay at home; but Madame Phlipon insisted that she should keep her promise to her friends at the convent; and advised her to take a turn in the Jardin du Roi, before she returned.

The visit to Agatha was very brief. 'Why are you in such haste?' asked the nun. 'I am anxious to return to my mother.' 'But you told me she was well.' —'She is better than usual; but something torments me; I shall not be easy till I see her again.' Her manner of taking leave was so singular, that sister Agatha begged to hear from her immediately. She hurried home, notwithstanding the observation of the maid that a walk in the Jardin du Roi would be extremely pleasant. A little girl at the door informed her that her mother was very ill. She flew into the room, and found her almost lifeless. She tried to embrace her child; but one arm only obeyed the impulse of her will; and with that she wiped away the tears, and gently patted her cheek in a vain effort to comfort her. She tried to tell how impatiently she had expected her; but palsy tied her tongue, and she could only utter uncouth sounds.

As long as there was any demand for her activity, Mademoiselle Phlipon never lost her energy, nor her presence of mind; but, when the priest came to admin-

ister the sacrament to the dying, and she attempted to hold the light, with her eyes rivetted on her beloved parent, anguish proved too strong for nature, and she fell senseless on the floor. From this state she awoke to find that her mother was dead. Sorrow for a time made her perfectly delirious. During one of her fainting fits, they conveyed her to the house of one of her relatives. For eight days, she was unable to shed a tear; she was often seized with strong convulsions, and the physicians thought her life was in great danger. At last a letter from her friend Sophia made her weep; and the alarming symptoms abated; a renewal of the fits was, however, for several weeks produced by any circumstance that served to remind her of her loss. Her father tried to comfort her by telling her what a blessing it was that her mother had lived to educate her; and that, if she must lose one of her parents, it was better the one should remain, who could most benefit her fortune. This consolatory argument, so little suited to her character and condition, only served to aggravate her grief. She felt that her father could never understand her, and that she was entirely an orphan. Speaking of her mother, she says, 'The world never contained a better, or more amiable woman. Nothing brilliant rendered her remarkable, but everything tended to endear her, as soon as she was known. Naturally wise and good, virtue never seemed to cost her any effort. Her pure and tranquil spirit pursued its even course like the docile stream that bathes with equal gentleness the foot of the rock, which holds it captive, and the valley, which it at once enriches and adorns. With her death concluded the tranquillity of my youth.

ful existence, passed in the enjoyment of blissful affections and beloved occupations.'

The relatives of Mademoiselle Phlipon tried to cheer her spirits by inviting everybody with whom she was acquainted; but she had so little power of attending to others that she sometimes appeared insane. If anything happened, however remotely, to remind her of her mother's image, she shrieked and fainted away. 'It is a good thing to possess sensibility, it is unfortunate to have so much of it,' said her friend, the Abbé Legrand. He had sagacity enough to perceive that it was wise to talk to her a good deal about her mother, in order that her mind might freely unburthen itself of a subject alike interesting and oppressive. As soon as he thought she could fix her attention on a book, he brought her Rousseau's Heloise. It is not a volume I should have thought of selecting to afford consolation to a mourner; but she says the interest with which she read it was the first alleviation of her sorrow.

When she returned home, she found that her mother's portrait had been removed; from the mistaken idea that the vacant space it once occupied would be less painful to her than the image of her deceased parent. Her first care was to have it restored.

Her excessive grief excited a good deal of attention. It was thought a very remarkable thing that filial regret should endanger the life of a young woman. Among the marks of regard she received at this time, the most flattering was from M. de Boismorel, son of the lady to whom she took such a dislike in her childhood. Her father, flattered by M. de Boismorel's good opinion of his daughter, could not refrain from showing him some

of her writings, one day when she was absent. She was a good deal offended at this attack upon her private property; but was soothed by a very flattering letter from M. de Boismorel, offering the use of his library at all times. She says this was the first time her self-love was gratified by finding herself appreciated by one on whose judgment she placed a high value. A friendly correspondence continued between them during his life; by means of which she was constantly acquainted with the novèlties of the literary and scientific world. He advised her to commence author in good earnest, after having deliberately chosen the line of literature best suited to her taste. In answer to this proposition she represented to him her disinterested love of study, and her aversion to appearing before the public. In this reply she wrote the following verses:

Aux hommes ouvrant la carrière
Des grands et des nobles talents,
Ils n'ont mis aucune barrière
A leur plus sublimes èlans.

De mon sexe foible et sensible,
Ils ne veulent que des vertus;
Nous pouvons imiter Titus,
Mais dans un sentier moins penible.

Jouissez du bien d'être admis
A toutes ces sortes de gloire;
Pour nous le temple de mémoire
Est dans les cœurs de nos amis.

These lines have been translated with something more of vigorous thought, though with less smoothness in the versification:

To man's aspiring sex 'tis given
To climb the highest hill of fame,
To tread the shortest road to heaven,
And gain by death a deathless name.

Of well-fought fields, and trophies won,
The memory lives while ages pass,
Graven on everlasting stone,
Or written on retentive brass.

But to poor feeble woman-kind
The meed of glory is denied;
Within a narrow sphere confined,
The lowly virtues are their pride.

Yet not deciduous is their fame,
Ending where frail existence ends;
A sacred temple holds their name—
The hearts of their surviving friends.

M. de Boismorel had so high an opinion of his young friend, that notwithstanding the difference of rank, he cherished the wish of uniting her to his son, who was younger than she was, and being indolent and inconsiderate, seemed to need a decided and judicious wife. Mademoiselle Phlipon however did not take a fancy to this young sprig of aristocracy; and her discreet friend had too much delicacy to make regular proposals to her father, which he knew she would be painfully urged to accept.

The young lady, finding her parental home a desolate place, did sometimes feel a sensation of melancholy, when she cast her eyes around upon her acquaintance without finding one at all suited to her taste. A young lawyer, who had once been rejected, renewed his visits; and her romantic sensibility gradually invested him with powerful attractions. Her father, at first, made it a rule

to stay in the room when any gentleman came; but finding it very dull business to act the duenna, he shut his door against everybody, except those whose age and gravity rendered his presence unnecessary. Mademoiselle Phlipon wrote to her lover that it was her father's wish that he should discontinue his visits, but left him reason to conclude that they were by no means unpleasant to her. This romance lasted but a short time. Her friend, Sophia Cannet, came to visit her; and having met the young lawyer in the gardens of the Luxembourg, she pointed him out as a notorious fortune-hunter, who had proposed himself to so many *only daughters*, that the heiresses had agreed to bestow upon him the title of *lover of the eleven thousand virgins;* this name had reference to a legend told in the convents, of the miraculous martyrdom of eleven thousand virgins. This account dispelled the illusions of sentiment. The young man, having formed an acquaintance with a girl reputed to have more fortune, troubled her no further for several months; at the end of which time, he had the audacity to call and request her assistance in a literary project he had undertaken; he was received with a stinging contempt, which soon terminated his visit. This man was La Blancherie, afterward Agent of the Correspondence for forwarding the Arts and Sciences.

After the death of her mother, Mademoiselle Phlipon was most affectionately attended by a beloved cousin, named Madame Trude. This lady had a vulgar and brutal husband, entirely unworthy of her; her unhappiness was considerably increased by his daring to entertain a violent passion for her cousin. As Trude had no children, and had some fortune, M. Phlipon was anx-

ious to be particularly polite to him; and this circumstance increased the embarrassment of his daughter's situation. She tried to bear with him for the sake of his worthy wife; but his attentions at last became insupportable. In plain terms she asked him to confine his visits to her father; but she says if she had thrown him out of the window, he would have come back by the chimney. Sometimes, on Sundays, she sent away the maid, and fastened every door and window, to be free from his interruptions; and after walking round the house two or three hours, he would reluctantly retire. She used to manage visits to his wife, at the house of one of their aged relations. Although the dignity of her deportment prevented this man from ever saying anything offensive to modesty, yet his manners and conversation were so much at variance with propriety and good-breeding, that he was a perpetual torment to her. From these connexions her pride met with a severe trial; and the manner in which she conducted herself does credit to the strength of her character. Madame Trude was compelled to leave home for a few weeks; but her surly husband would not consent that she should leave his counter, unless Mademoiselle Phlipon would agree to take her place, in the middle of the day, when customers would be most likely to come in. Madame Trude begged her to accede to this proposition; and she felt that the obligations she owed to her cousin's friendship rendered it a duty. Trude, highly delighted, and not a little proud, conducted with great propriety, and his wife was deeply grateful for the kindness. Thus Madame Roland says, 'In spite of my aversion to trade,

it was decreed that, at one time in my life, I should sell watch-glasses and spectacles. The situation was not agreeable. I can conceive nothing more dreadful, to a person standing in an open shop, than the noise of carriages eternally rolling along. I should soon have been deaf, as my poor cousin Trude now is.'

At this period of her life, she had occasional glimpses of the great world, through the friendship of M. de Boismorel. His proud mother began to think her of more consequence than she had formerly done; and gave her occasional invitations to visit at her house. She sometimes complains that the company invited to meet them was better suited to her father than herself; but when she did meet with any of the nobility, she seems to have regarded them with all her early dislike. She says, 'The old marquises and antiquated dowagers certainly talked with more importance than church-wardens and sober cits, but to me they appeared quite as insipid.

'Madame de Boismorel eulogized my taste in dress. "You don't love feathers, do you, Mademoiselle? Ah, how different you are from giddy-headed girls!" "I never wear feathers, madam, because I think they would announce a condition in life, that does not belong to an artist's daughter, going about on foot."—"But would you wear them if you were in a different situation?"—"I do not know whether I should or not. I attach very little importance to such trifles. I merely consider what is suitable to myself; and should be very sorry to judge of others by the superficial information afforded by their dress." The answer was severe; but its point was blunted by the soft tone of voice in which it was pronounced. I was like the good man, of whom Madame

de Sevigné said that the love of his neighbor cut off half his words. A fondness for satire indicates a mind pleased with irritating others; for myself, I never could find amusement in killing flies. I deserved the character given me by one of my friends, that though possessed of wit to point an epigram, I never suffered one to escape my lips.'

Madame Roland gives an account of a visit to a wealthy family, which is interesting, as it serves to show the state of things in France at that period. One of her connexions had married M. Besnard, who had been a steward in the family of M. Haudry, a rich financier. Old Madame Phlipon was highly offended at this marriage; but Madame Roland says, 'I esteem it an honor to be related to M. Besnard; and I should do so, if, with the same character and conduct, he had been a footman. In his attachment to his wife he showed the greatest delicacy of sentiment; it is impossible to carry veneration and tenderness to a greater length. Enjoying the sweets of a perfect union, they live in their old age like Baucis and Philemon, attracting the respect of all who witness the simplicity and excellence of their lives.'

As Mademoiselle Phlipon's health was considered precarious, the physicians advised change of air; and it was agreed that she and her aunt Angelica should visit M. Besnard at Fontenay, near the chateau of Souci. The family at the chateau, hearing of their arrival, called to see them. Madame Penault (whose daughter had married Haudry's son) allowed something of condescension to mix with her politeness; while the consciousness of worth, and the doubt of its being perceived by others, gave unusual dignity to the artist's daughter.—

The strangers were invited to dine. Madame Roland says, 'Never was astonishment equal to mine, when I learnt that we were not to dine at her table, but with the upper servants in the hall. I was sensible, however, that as M. Besnard had formerly played a part there, I ought not to appear dissatisfied, out of respect to him. I thought Madame Penault might have spared us the contemptuous civility; my great-aunt had the same opinion; but to avoid giving offence, we accepted the invitation. It was something entirely new to me to mix with those deities of the second order; I had no idea what chambermaids were, when they undertook to give themselves airs of consequence. They acted their superiors well. Dress, gesture, affectation,— nothing was forgotten. The caricature of fashionable manners superadded a sort of elegance, not less foreign to mercantile simplicity, than to the taste of an artist. It was still worse with the men. The sword of the steward, the attentions of the cook, and the gaudy clothes of the valet-de-chambre, could not atone for the vulgarity of their expressions, when they forgot their parts, or for the blunders they made when they wished their language to be elegant. The conversation was full of marquises and counts, whose titles seemed to confer grandeur on those who talked of them. Play followed the repast; the stake was high; it was what the *ladies* were accustomed to play for, and they played every day. I was introduced to a new world, in which were exhibited the vices, prejudices, and follies of the fashionable world,— very little better in reality, notwithstanding its greater show.

Young Haudry was a spoiled child of fortune, with

an erect carriage, and the airs of a great man; perhaps he was amiable among those he esteemed his equals; but I hated to come in his way, and always assumed an air of dignified reserve when he approached. I had heard of the origin of old Haudry a hundred times: He came from his village to Paris, and, by raking together thousands, at the expense of the public, found means to marry his grand-daughters to Counts and Marquises. I recollected Montesquieu's expression, that 'financiers support the state, as the cord supports the criminal.' I could not help thinking that the government must be detestable, and the nation very corrupt where tax-gatherers make their opulence a means of alliance with families, which court-policy affects to consider as necessary to the defence and splendor of the kingdom. I little thought then, that there could be a government more horrible — a degree of corruption still more to be deplored. Who indeed could have imagined it, before the days of Danton and Robespierre?'

The dissipated habits of M. Phlipon were somewhat checked by the death of his excellent wife; but after a while they regained their power over him. In vain his daughter tried to render his home agreeable. Having few ideas in common with him, she proposed cards evening after evening, notwithstanding her aversion to the game; but this, and all her other efforts, were of no avail. He had become attached to society as unsuited to the intelligence of his daughter, as it had been to the refinement of his wife. In an ill-assorted marriage, the virtue of one party may keep up an appearance of happiness, but inconveniences will, sooner or later, result from a union defective in its very foundation.

In France, the wife's fortune and her personal effects are generally secured by the marriage-contract to her children, or restored to her relations, in case she dies childless. The relations of Mademoiselle Phlipon, being honest, confiding people, neglected to demand an inventory at the time of her mother's decease; and she felt a sense of impropriety in doing it herself. At last, his increasing profligacy made the step absolutely necessary. At the risk of incurring his displeasure, she took the requisite means, and was enabled to secure to herself five hundred livres (about one hundred dollars) a year; this, with a few articles of furniture, was all that remained of the apparent opulence in which she had been educated. It was the more necessary to reserve this pittance for herself, as her father's unkindness increased in proportion to his irregularity of life; he was even unwilling to pay the postage of her letters.

In the midst of these trials, literature was a never-failing resource and consolation. She saw scarcely any company except her aged relatives, and divided her time between her domestic duties and her books. She read the most celebrated of the French preachers, wrote criticisms on Bourdaloue, and herself composed a moral sermon, on the subject of brotherly love. She likewise wrote a dissertation on a subject proposed by the Academy of Besançon, — *How can the Education of Women be made to conduce to the Improvement of Men?* In this dissertation, she attempted to prove that a new order of things was necessary; that it was useless to attempt the reformation of one sex by means of the other, until the condition of the whole species was ameliorated by good laws.

She still continued her correspondence with Sophia Cannet, for whom she cherished unabated friendship. This young lady often mentioned in her letters a gentleman, who visited her father; she represented him as universally esteemed for his good sense and integrity, though he sometimes gave offence by severity bordering on sarcasm. Sophia had shown him the portrait of her friend Mary (or Molly) Jane Phlipon, and had talked much to him of her talents and her virtues. 'Shall I never have a letter to this charming friend?' he used to say: 'I go every year to Paris — why do you not make me acquainted with her?' In December, 1775, he obtained the desired commission. The letter of introduction was thus worded: 'You will receive this from the hands of M. Roland de la Platiere, the philosopher I have mentioned to you. He is an enlightened man, of spotless reputation, who can be reproached with nothing but his too great admiration for the ancients, at the expense of the moderns, whom he undervalues; and with being too fond of speaking of himself.'

Roland was born of an opulent family, which had for several centuries been ennobled by offices, that they had not power to transmit to their heirs. This lasted as long as wealth enabled them to support all the outward signs of rank, such as arms, liveries, &c. But the fortune was wasted by prodigality and bad management; and Jean-Marie Roland de la Platiere found himself the youngest of five brothers, with nothing but his own energies to rely upon. At the age of nineteen, he left the paternal roof, friendless and alone. Being averse to commerce, and unwilling to enter the church, he made preparations to go out to India; this project was pre-

vented by an illness which would have made it death to venture on the sea. Having a relation who was an inspector of manufactures, he was induced to enter into that department of business, in which he soon distinguished himself by his activity and skill. When he first became acquainted with Mademoiselle Phlipon, he was in the lucrative office of Inspector General of Manufactures at Amiens. He divided his time between travelling and study. Taking great interest in all subjects connected with political economy, he wrote several pamphlets on commerce, the mechanical arts, the management of sheep, &c.; in consequence of which he belonged to several scientific societies. During his visits to Paris he had frequent opportunities of seeing Mademoiselle Phlipon, then in her twenty-second year, with a mind fully matured, and a person uninjured by time. His frank and instructive conversation pleased her; and he was delighted with her, because she was a good listener; a faculty by which she says she gained more friends, than by her facility in speaking. He had made a tour in Germany, of which he kept a journal; and this, with other manuscripts, he confided to the care of Mademoiselle Phlipon, when he departed for Italy in the autumn of 1776. She says, 'These manuscripts made me better acquainted with him, during the eighteen months he passed in Italy, than frequent visits could have done. They consisted of travels, reflections, plans of literary works, and personal anecdotes; a strong mind, strict principles, learning, and taste, were evident in every page. Before his departure for Italy, he introduced me to his best-beloved brother, a Benedictine monk, who sometimes came to see me, and communi-

cated the notes his brother transmitted to him. These notes were afterward published in the form of letters on Italy, Switzerland, Sicily, and Malta. A friend, who had the care of printing them, injudiciously loaded them with Italian quotations. This work, abounding in matter, wants only to be better digested, to hold the highest rank among books of the kind. On M. Roland's return, I found myself possessed of a friend. The gravity of his manners and his studious habits inspired the utmost confidence. It was several years after our acquaintance began, before he declared himself a lover. I did not hear it with indifference, because I esteemed him more than any man I had yet seen; but I had remarked that neither he nor his family were indifferent to worldly considerations. I frankly told him that I felt honored by his addresses, and that I should be happy to make him a return for his affection; but that my father was a ruined man, and his errors and debts might bring further disgrace upon those connected with him. I was too proud to enter a family that might feel degraded by my alliance, or to make the generosity of my husband a source of mortification to him. M. Roland persisted; I was moved by his entreaties, and consented that he should make his proposals in form. As soon as he returned to Amiens, he wrote to my father, making known his wishes. My father thought the letter dry; he did not like a son-in-law of such rigid principles. He answered the letter in rude, impertinent terms. I wrote to M. Roland, telling him the event had justified my fears respecting my parent, and that I begged him to abandon his design, because I did not wish to be the

occasion of his receiving further affronts. I informed my father of this proceeding, and told him that he could not be surprised at my wish to retire to a convent.

In order to satisfy his creditors, I left him my share of the plate. I hired a little apartment in the convent of the Congregation, and there took up my abode, with a firm resolution to regulate my expenses according to my little income. Potatoes, rice, and beans, with a sprinkling of salt and a little butter, varied my food, and were cooked with small loss of time. I went out but twice a week; once to visit my aged relations; and once to my father's, to look over the linen, and take away what needed mending. It was winter, and I was lodged near the sky, under a roof of snow. I refused to mix habitually with the boarders; devoting all my leisure time to my studies, I steeled my heart against adversity, and avenged myself on fate by deserving the happiness it did not bestow. My kind Agatha passed an hour with me every evening. A few turns in the garden, when everybody was out of the way, constituted my solitary walks. The resignation of a patient temper, the quiet of a good conscience, the elevation of spirit which sets misfortune at defiance, the laborious habits that make time pass so rapidly, the delicate taste of a sound mind finding pleasures in the consciousness of existence and of its own value, which the vulgar never know,—these were my riches. I was not always free from melancholy; but even melancholy had its charms. Though I was not happy, I had within me all the means of being so; and I had reason to be proud that I knew how to do without the external things I wanted. M. Roland, surprised and afflicted, continued

to write to me with constant affection, but expressing himself highly offended at my father's conduct. At the expiration of five or six months, he came to visit me, and felt the flame of love revive on seeing me at the grate, where I still retained some appearance of prosperity. He again offered me his hand, and urged me to receive the nuptial benediction from his brother the prior. I entered into deep deliberation concerning what I ought to do. I could not help being sensible that a younger man would not have waited so long without endeavoring to make me change my resolution. I readily confess that this consideration dispelled all illusion from my sentiments. On the other hand, I considered that his perseverance was the fruit of mature deliberation, and proved his sense of my merit. Since he had overcome his repugnance to the disagreeable circumstances, that might attend the match, I was the more secure of his esteem, which I should not find it difficult to justify. Besides, if matrimony were a partnership, in which the woman generally undertakes to provide for the happiness of both parties, was it not better, to exert my faculties in that honorable condition, than in the forlorn and ascetic life I was leading in the convent?'

They were married in the winter of 1779–80. She was twenty-five years of age, and he was nearly forty-seven. The following is M. Roland's portrait, by his wife. 'He was tall and negligent in his carriage, with that stiffness, which is often contracted by study. His manners were easy and simple, without possessing the fashionable graces; he combined the politeness of a well-bred man with the gravity of a philosopher. Want of flesh, a complexion accidentally yellow, a forehead

very high and thinly covered with hair, did not destroy the effect of a regular set of features, though it rendered them rather respectable than engaging. His smile was very expressive; and when he grew animated in conversation, or an agreeable idea crossed his mind, his whole face was lighted up. His conversation was full of interesting matter, because his head was full of ideas; but it occupied the mind more than it pleased the ear, because his language, though sometimes impressive, was always monotonous and harsh. In marrying him I became the wife of a truly worthy man, who continued to love me more the better he knew me. Although married at a mature age, I fulfilled my duties with an ardor that was rather the effect of enthusiasm than of calculation. By studying my partner's happiness I discovered that something was wanting to my own. I have never for a moment ceased to consider my husband the most estimable of human beings, as a man to whom I might be proud of belonging; but I have often felt the disparity between us. He was more than twenty years older than myself; and this, combined with the ascendency of an imperious temper, constituted too great superiority. If we lived in solitude, I sometimes had disagreeable hours to pass; if we mixed with the world, I was beloved by persons, some of whom appeared likely to take too strong hold of my affections. I immersed myself in study with my husband, to such a degree, that my health suffered. Accustomed to have me share with him all his pursuits, he learned to think he could not do without me at any time, or on any occasion.

'We passed the first year of our marriage entirely at Paris, whither Roland had been sent for by the board

of trade, who were desirous of making some new regulations concerning manufactures; regulations which Roland's principles of liberty made him oppose with all his might. He was printing an account of some of the arts, which he had written for the academy, and taking a fair copy of his Italian notes. He made me his copyist and the corrector of the press. I executed the task with a degree of humility, at which I cannot help laughing when I recollect it. It seems almost irreconcilable with a mind so active as mine; but it flowed directly from my heart. I so sincerely respected my husband, that I easily believed him to know everything better than I could. At the same time he was so tenacious of his opinions, and I was so afraid of a cloud upon his brow, that it was long before I had confidence enough to contradict him. I was then attending a course of lectures on natural history and botany. These were the only recreations I enjoyed after the employments of secretary and housekeeper. We lived at ready-furnished lodgings during our stay in Paris; and perceiving that all kinds of cooking did not agree with my husband's delicate constitution, I took care to prepare the food that best suited him.

'We passed four years at Amiens, where I became a mother and a nurse, without ceasing to partake of my husband's labors. He had engaged to write a considerable part of the new Encyclopedia; we never stirred from the desk except to take a walk out of the gates of the town, for the purpose of studying botany. Frequent sickness alarmed me for Roland's life. My cares were not ineffectual, and they served to strengthen the tie that

united us. He loved me for my boundless attention, and I was attached to him by the good I did him.'

A letter from Madame Roland to one of her friends shows that she lost nothing of her republican zeal by associating with a husband, whose enthusiasm for liberty was quite equal to her own.

'DEAR FRIEND,—I inclose a letter from M. Gosse, from which you will learn how the combined forces of France, Savoy and Berne behaved, when they took possession of Geneva. I was out of all patience in reading it. The very idea still makes the blood boil in my veins. It is clear, Geneva was no longer worthy of liberty—we see nothing like the energy it required to defend so dear a property, or die beneath its ruins. I have only the greater hatred for its oppressors, whose infectious neighborhood had corrupted the republic before they came to put an end to its existence. Gosse tells me that the friend who was with him at Paris is of the aristocratic party. They hold no intercourse since the overthrow of liberty, lest their opposite tempers of mind should produce a disagreeable altercation. I would have laid a wager it would have taken place. His friend is that M. Coladon, whom I used to call *Celadon*, whose only merit is that of being a pretty fellow. His servile air and supple demeanor bespoke him a slave at first sight. I would not give a cripple, of the same cast as Gosse, for a hundred of him. Virtue and liberty have no longer an asylum, unless in the hearts of a small number of honest men. A fig for the rest—and for all the thrones in the world! I would tell a king so to his face. From a woman, it would only be laughed at;

but, by my soul, if I had been at Geneva, I would have died before they should have laughed at me.'

In the early part of her union, M. Roland had required her to withdraw considerably from her intimate friends; but time gave him confidence in her affections, and removed his fear of being rivalled. By his advice, she made a visit to her friend Sophia, early in the summer of 1783. A letter from this place breathes a more feminine strain than the preceding. The acknowledgment, that society was dangerous to her, because she met objects likely to engross her affections, contrasts oddly enough with the sincere attachment to M. Roland, expressed in the following epistle. An American wife cannot understand such things.

'SAILLY, NEAR COSSIR.

'I do not know the day of the month. All I can tell you is, that we are in the month of June; that yesterday was a holiday; and that according to our reckoning here, it is three o'clock in the afternoon. On Sunday I had a visit from my good man, who left me again yesterday evening. I have nothing to send in return for your news. I do not trouble my head about politics; and I am no longer in the way of picking up any of another kind. I can only entertain you with an account of the dogs that wake me, of the birds that console me for not being able to sleep again, of the cherry-trees that are opposite my windows, and of the heifers that graze before the door. I am under the roof of a friend, on whom I fixed my affections when in a convent at eleven years of age, with forty other girls, who thought of nothing but romping to dispel the gloom of the cloister

In days of yore, I was devout like Madame Guyon; my companion was a little mystical also; and our friendship was fed by the same sensibility that made us religious to distraction. After her return to her own part of the country, she made me acquainted with M. Roland, by entrusting him with the delivery of her letters. Judge whether I ought not to love and cherish her for this! This friend is lately married; and I had some share in inducing her to do so. I am now visiting her in the country, which I have often represented to her as the abode best suited to a virtuous mind. I walk over her estate; I count her poultry; we gather fruit in the garden;—and we are of opinion that all this is well worth the gravity with which fashionables sit round the card-table — the necessity of passing half the day in the important business of dressing,—the prittle-prattle of fops, &c. &c. Notwithstanding all this, I feel a longing desire to return to Amiens, because only one half of me is here. My friend forgives me; for *her* husband being absent, she is better able to judge of my privations. We find it very comfortable to condole with each other; but we perfectly agree in the opinion, that to be at a distance from the dovecot, or to be there alone, is a very miserable thing. I am however to pass the whole week here. I do not know whether my health will be as much benefited as my good man hoped. I have laid aside all study for three days, without feeling any wonderful advantage. I was pretty well satisfied with the looks of our friend, when he was here; but I dread his study as I dread fire. The week I have to pass here seems an eternity to me, on account of the mischief he may do himself while I am gone. Your description of your la-

borious life answers very little purpose. I do not pity you at all. In my opinion, to be busy is to be half-way toward happiness.'

Having become engaged in a playful warfare with the same friend concerning the equality of the sexes, she thus writes: 'What is the deference paid by your sex to mine, but the indulgence shown by powerful magnanimity to the weak whom it protects and honors? When you assume the tone of masters, you make us recollect that we are able to resist you, and perhaps to do more, notwithstanding all your strength. Do you pay us homage? It is Alexander treating his prisoners (who are not ignorant of their dependence) with the respect due to queens. In this single particular, civilization goes hand in hand with nature. The laws place us in a state of almost constant subjection, while custom grants us all the honors of society. We are nothing in reality; in appearance we are everything. Do not then any longer imagine that I form a false estimate of what *we* have a right to require, or of what it becomes *you* to claim. I believe that I will not say more than any woman, but as much as any man, with regard to the superiority of your sex. In the first place, you have strength, with all the advantage that it confers; courage, perseverance, extensive views, and great talents. It belongs to you to make political laws, as well as scientific discoveries; to govern the world, change the surface of the globe, be magnanimous, terrible, skilful and learned. You are all this without our assistance; and this no doubt makes you our masters. But without us, you would be neither virtuous, nor kind, nor amiable, nor happy.

Keep then to yourselves glory and authority of all kinds. We desire no empire but over manners — no throne but in your hearts. I am sorry to see women sometimes contend for privileges that become them so ill. There is not one of those privileges, even to the title of author, that does not seem to me ridiculous in female hands. To make one person happy, and to bind a number together by the charms of friendship, and by winning ways, is the most enviable destiny that can be conceived. Let us live in peace ; only recollect that to keep the high ground you stand upon in relation to woman-kind, be cautious of making them feel your superiority. The war in which I have engaged you for amusement, and with all the freedom of an old friend, would be carried on in a more serious manner by an artful coquette ; nor would you leave the field without a wound. Protect always, that you may submit when you please ; that is the secret of your sex. But what a pretty simpleton I am to be telling you all this !'

She thus describes her visit to the tomb of Rousseau : 'The valley in which Ermenonville is situated is the most miserable thing in the world. Black and muddy water; no prospect; not a single view of rich and cultivated fields ; low, marshy meadows, and woods in which you seem buried. The Isle of Poplars, in the midst of a noble piece of water, surrounded with trees, is the most agreeable and interesting spot in all Ermenonville, independently of the object that has so much attraction for thoughtful minds and feeling hearts. If Rousseau, however, had not given it celebrity, I doubt whether any one would have gone out of his way to visit it. We went into the master's room, which is no lon-

ger inhabited, and in which Rousseau must have been buried alive without air or prospect. He is now more handsomely accommodated than he ever was while living.

'Our excursions have been delightful. But when I returned, poor Eudora did not remember her afflicted mother. I expected to be forgotten; but nevertheless I wept like a child. Alas! said I to myself, I fare no better than mothers who do not nurse their children though I deserve something better.* The little creature's affection for me was interrupted by the suspension of the habit of seeing me. When I think of it, my heart is ready to break. My child has resumed her customary caresses; but I no longer dare to believe in the sentiment, from which they derived their value. I wish she were still an infant, and still depended upon me for her nourishment.'

In 1784, Madame Roland accompanied her husband in a journey to England. Of this excursion, she says, 'Our journey gave us great satisfaction. I shall ever remember with pleasure a country of which Delolme taught me to love the constitution, and where I have witnessed the good effects produced by that constitution. Fools may chatter, and slaves may sing; but take my word for it, England contains men who have a right to laugh at us.

I have to inform you for your satisfaction that Eudora knew us on our return, though we appeared to her as if in a dream. She kissed me with a kind of gravity

* In France it is very unusual for mothers to nurse their own children, except among the poorest classes — One very good reason why there is no such word as *home* in the French language!

mixed with affection, and then uttered a faint cry of surprise and joy at the sight of her father. She had been in great health during our absence; but next morning, while running about, she rolled down stairs in such a way that I thought her dead, and was little better than dead myself.'

After their return from England, Madame Roland went to Paris, to solicit letters patent of nobility for her husband, who could not spare time from his accumulated literary labors to perform the journey himself.

It has been already said that Roland belonged to a family, whose nobility disappeared with their opulence. Having obtained an easy fortune, he was desirous of being reinstated in the rank of his ancestors. This application was afterward violently blamed and ridiculed by his Jacobin enemies. Madame Roland requested certificates from the superintendents of trade in Paris; but they, being jealous of Roland's long experience in a branch of administration which he understood much better than themselves, and differing from him in some of his opinions, — did not comply with her wishes in a manner entirely satisfactory. On this account the subject was set aside for a time, and was not afterward renewed. Knowing her husband's wish to be near his family, she asked and obtained for him, during her stay in Paris, the office of Inspector General of Commerce and Manufactures at Lyons. This change of residence does not seem to have contributed to her happiness. They passed the winters at Lyons, and spent the summers at Ville Franche, M. Roland's paternal abode.— His mother and elder brother resided on the same estate. Madame Roland says of the former, 'She is ren-

dered respectable by her age, and terrible by her bad temper. My husband is passionately fond of independence, and his elder brother is accustomed and inclined to domineer; he is more despotic, more fanatic, and more obstinate, than any priest you ever saw. The parish of Thezée, two leagues from Ville Franche, in which is situated the *Clos** de la Platière, is a country of an arid soil, but rich in vineyards and woods. It is the last region in which the vine is cultivated, as you advance toward the lofty mountains of Beaujolois. We used frequently to go to this place in the autumn; and after my mother-in-law's death, we spent there the greater part of the year. Here my simple taste was exercised in all the details of rural economy. I became the village doctor; and was the more revered, because I bestowed assistance instead of requiring a reward, and because the pleasure of doing good gave grace to my attentions. Honest countrywomen have come several leagues to beg me to save a life given over by the physicians. In 1789, my soothing cares saved my husband from a dreadful disease, when all the prescriptions of the doctors failed. I passed twelve days and nights without sleep, and six months in the uneasiness of precarious convalescence; and yet I was not ill: so much does our strength and activity depend upon the heart.'

The following letter from Ville Franche shows the nature of Madame Roland's occupations at this period of her life:

'You ask me how I pass my time? On rising, I busy myself with attending upon my child, and my husband.

* A tract of vineyard inclosed.

I get breakfast for both, hear the little one read, and then leave them together in the study, while I go and inquire into the household affairs from the cellar to the garret. The fruit, the wine, the linen, and other details, contribute to my daily stock of cares. We are obliged to be in dress at noon, as there is a chance of company, which the old lady is very fond of inviting. If I have any time left, I pass it in the study with my husband, in the literary labors I have always been accustomed to share with him. After dinner, we stay a little while together, and I remain pretty constantly with my mother-in-law till company comes; in such cases I am at liberty, and go to the study to write. In the evening, the newspaper, or something better, is read aloud. Gentlemen sometimes join us in the study. If I am not the reader, I sit modestly at my needlework, taking care to keep the child quiet. She never leaves us, except when we have a formal repast for visiters. As I do not wish her to be troublesome, or to take up the attention of the company, on such occasions she remains in her own room, or takes a walk with her maid; and does not make her appearance till the dessert is finished. Sometimes, but not often, I take a walk with my good man and Eudora. Bating these trifling differences, every day sees me turn in the same circle. English, Italian, and music, in which I so much delight, are talents hidden under the ashes; but I shall know where to find them, in order to instil them into my daughter's mind, as she grows older. The interest of my child, order in the things entrusted to my care, and peace among those with whom I am connected, constitute my business and my pleasure.—This kind of life would be very austere, were not my

husband a man of great merit, whom I love with my whole heart; but with this *datum*, it is most delightful. Tender friendship and unbounded confidence mark every moment of existence, and stamp a value upon all things, which nothing without them would have. It is the life most favorable to virtue and to happiness. I appreciate its worth, I congratulate myself on enjoying it, and I exert my best endeavors to make it last.

'Eudora, our little delight, grows, and entertains us with her prattle. At this moment she is putting out her little mouth, and trying to kiss me, after having received from papa a tap upon her fingers, which were overturning everything on the table. Although brought up alone, she is a perfect romp. Her violent animal spirits will need a strong mind to govern them. She has all the intelligence that can be expected at her age, and can put up with anything, even dry bread, when doing penance. She begins to read well, and to leave other playthings for her needle; amuses herself with making geometrical figures; is entirely unfettered by dress; sets no value upon scraps of gauze and ends of riband; thinks herself fine when she has a clean white frock, and is told she is good; and looks upon a cake given with a kiss, as the greatest of all rewards. I was just now greatly scandalized by hearing her utter a big oath. She gives our servant Claude as authority. What admirable aptitude! She does not pass an hour in a fortnight with the servants; and I never stir a step without her. She has a strong inclination to say and do the very contrary of what she is desired, because she thinks it agreeable to act for herself; but as she is sure to be repaid with interest, she begins to suspect that she might

do better ; she gives herself as much credit for an act of obedience, as we should do for a sublime effort of the mind. I am her confidant upon all occasions ; and she is very much at loss what to do when we quarrel.'

Madame Roland's letters do not always breathe the same spirit of contentment. In a letter from Clos de la Platière, she says, ' I detest this place. We have killed a viper near the house, and Eudora may meet with that terrible reptile in some unfrequented walk. My heart fails me at the thought. More things than one put us out of humor with this country-house. We have laid aside the idea of rebuilding it. If you hear of a snug box to be sold on the road to Lyons, pray let us know.'

A few months after, she again writes, from the same place : ' I am still here, and shall probably remain some time. Economy guided us in our first resolution to live at Ville Franche ; but regard for our moral and physical welfare made us change our minds. True my mother-in-law lives at as great an expense during our absence ; and strangers occupy our places at her table. What then ? Here we have liberty and peace. We no longer hear a scolding tongue from morning till night, or behold a forbidding countenance, in which jealousy and anger are manifest through the disguise of irony, whenever we meet with any success, or receive any attention. With all my regard for you, I should not speak thus of my husband's mother, if he had not done so already. To confess the truth, these trials are more supportable than they were during the first two or three months. As long as I had hopes of finding a heart

among the whimsicalities of the most extraordinary disposition, I tormented myself in endeavoring to gain it, and was distressed because I could not. Now I see in a proper point of view a selfish, fantastical being, governed entirely by a spirit of contradiction, who never enjoyed anything but the power of tormenting by her caprices, who triumphs in the death of two children, after she had steeped their souls in bitterness, who would smile at the death of all of us, and who scarcely takes any pains to conceal her sentiments, I feel my distress converted into indifference, almost into pity; and my fits of indignation and hatred become brief and unfrequent. Here we can breathe a pure air, and indulge in confidence and tenderness, without any fear that the manifestation of such sentiments will irritate a hard heart utterly a stranger to them. We cannot possess great blessings, without purchasing them at the expense of a few troubles. With such a husband as mine, and one so dear to me, this world would be a perfect paradise, if I had nothing else but sources of satisfaction."

At another time, she says, 'I verily believe I am imbibing some of the inclinations of the beast whose milk is restoring me to health. I am growing *asinine*, by dint of attending to the little cares of a *piggish* country life. I am preserving pears, which will be delicious; we are drying raisins and prunes; are in the midst of a great wash, and getting up the linen; make our breakfast upon wine; overlook the people busied in the vintage; rest ourselves in the woods and meadows; knock down walnuts; and, after gathering our stock of fruit for the winter, spread it in the garret; after break-

fast, we are all going in a body to gather almonds. Throw off your fetters for a little while, and join us in our retreat; you will find there true friendship, and real simplicity of heart.'

Some time after, she says, 'As long as I remained nailed to my desk in the study, you heard from me often, and could judge of my way of life, perhaps of my heart, by my correspondence; but the people of our town looked upon me as a hermit, who could only converse with the dead, and who disdained all commerce with her fellow-creatures. I laid down my pen; suspended my literary labors; walked forth from my museum; talked, ate, danced and laughed with all that came in my way; and then my neighbors perceived I was not an owl — nor a constellation — nor a female pedant — but a being both tolerable and tolerant; while you, on the other hand, thought me dead. I am now about to resume solitude and study, and expect to hear you alter your note once more.'

Having made a sceptical remark in one of her letters, she returns to the subject in her next, and says, 'I must confess to you that when I am walking in peaceful meditation, in the midst of some rural scene, of which I relish the beauties, it seems delightful to me to owe the blessings I enjoy to a Supreme Intelligence: at such times I believe and adore. It is only in the dust of the closet, while poring over books, or in the bustle of the world, while breathing the corruption of mankind, that these sentiments die away, and a *gloomy* sort of reason rises enveloped with the clouds of doubt, and the destructive vapors of incredulity.'

The following letter is merely quoted as a sample of

the sprightliness of her style ; I know not to whom it is addressed, nor to what it is a reply.

'Oh ! a great deal worse than giddy — why, you are inconsiderate, impertinent — I know not what. How can you expect me ever to pardon you for having made me lose my time in copying the most tiresome things in the world ? Copy ! *I* copy ! It is a degradation — a profanation — a sin against all the laws of taste. After this, it becomes you well to go snuffing the wind, and strutting along — *You*, an interloper in the capital, whence I carried a great part of what was good for anything ! Do you not know that I have both pens and journals upon my toilet, — moreover verses to Iris, — that I can talk of my country-house, of my domestics, and of the stupidity of the town at this season of the year ? That I can pronounce sentence upon new books, fall in love with a work upon the report of the editor of the Parisian Journal, pay visits, talk nonsense, listen to the same, — and so on ? Is not that the utmost effort of the wit and art of the elegant woman in the great world ? Go your ways, young gentleman ! As yet, you are not clever enough for a *persiflage*, nor impudent enough for fashionable airs and graces. You have not even levity enough to encourage an experienced woman to undertake your education, without a risk of exposing herself. Go your ways, young man — pick up insects, dispute with the learned about snails' horns, or the color of a beetle's wings ; but as for the ladies, you are good for nothing but to give them the vapors. Do you know that Massachusetts is a very barbarous name ? And that a man of fashion was never known to utter such a

word when saying soft things to the fair sex? I heard of a lady who was so shocked at the sound of Transylvania, which was quite new to her, that she desired the impertinent speaker to leave the room.'

From Lyons she writes, 'My good man pronounced a discourse before the Academy, that was much applauded. The subject was The Influence of the Cultivation of Letters in the Provinces, compared with their Influence in the Capital. There was a good deal in it concerning women, which several present had reason to apply to themselves; they would tear my eyes out, perhaps, if they suspected I had any share in the composition. The secretary of the academy recited a poetic epistle, in which he congratulated our friend upon his return to his country, accompanied by a help-mate, of whom he spoke as — poets are apt to do. It is pretty certain that this did not tend to recommend me to the favor of the women. They would fain have it in their power to criticise the discourse of an academician, whose wife was the subjest of a public panegyric. When you know me to be in the country, you may show yourself as you are; an original, or a censor; if needs must be, you may be morose. In the country, my stock of indulgence is inexhaustible; my friendship forgives everything. But the company I see at Lyons puts me in good humor; my imagination grows more lively; and if you rouse it, you must take the consequences. I let no joke escape without sending it back with a sharpened point.'

Of her father, she thus speaks: 'He neither married, nor made any very ruinous engagements. We paid a few debts he had contracted, and by granting him an

annuity prevailed on him to leave business, in which it had become impossible for him to succeed. Though suffering so much from his errors, and though he had reason to be highly satisfied with our behavior, his spirit was too proud not to be hurt at the obligations he owed us. A state of irritated self-love often prevented him from doing justice, even to those who were most desirous of pleasing him. He died, aged upwards of sixty, in the hard winter of 1787.'

In the course of the same year, Madame Roland accompanied her husband in a tour through Switzerland, where she became acquainted with several interesting persons; among them was the famous Lavater, with whom she afterward corresponded. In passing through Geneva, she was filled with indignation at not finding a statue erected to the memory of Rousseau. After their return from Switzerland, they resided alternately at Lyons and at Clos de la Platière. They were enjoying their accustomed mode of life in these places, when the flame of the Revolution first broke out. Roland and his wife at once kindled with popular enthusiasm. Their imaginations had long been enamored of the ancient republics; and they now fancied the time had arrived for the political regeneration of mankind.

Extracts from her letters will best show her state of feeling at this time:

'Clos de la Platiere, 1790.

'In this place, I could easily forget public affairs; contented with feeding my rabbits, and seeing my hens hatch their young, I no longer think of revolutions. But as soon as I am in town, the insolence of the rich

and the misery of the people, excite my hatred against injustice and oppression; and I no longer ask for anything but the triumph of truth and the success of the Revolution. Our peasantry are very much discontented with the decree concerning feudal rights. We must have a reform, or we shall have more chateaux burnt. Preparations are making at Lyons for a camp. Send us brave fellows to make aristocracy tremble in its den.'

* * * * * * * *

'Lyons is subjugated. The Germans and Swiss domineer by means of their bayonets, employed in the service of a treacherous municipality in league with bad ministers and bad citizens. If we do not die for liberty, we shall soon have nothing left to do but weep for her. Do you say, we dare no longer *speak?* Be it so. We must *thunder* then. Join yourself to such honest people as you can find, and wake the people from their lethargy!' * * * * * *

'Death and destruction! What signifies your being Parisians? You cannot see to the end of your own noses — or else you want vigor to make your assembly get on. It was not our *representatives* who brought about the revolution; with the exception of a dozen or so, they are altogether beneath such a work. It was the *people*, who are always in the right, when public opinion is properly directed. Paris is the seat of that opinion. Finish your work then, or expect to see it watered with your blood. You are nothing but children. Your enthusiasm is a momentary blaze. If the national assembly do not bring two illustrious heads to a formal trial, or if some generous Decius do not strike them off, we shall all go to the —— together. The French

are so easily seduced by fair appearances on the part of their masters ! No doubt one half of the assembly was moved at the sight of Antoinette recommending her son. A child is of great consequence, to be sure ! The salvation of twenty millions of men is at stake. If this letter do not reach you, let the base wretches, who open it, blush when they learn that it is from a woman ; and let them tremble to reflect, that she is able to make a hundred enthusiasts, who will make a million more.'

* * * * * * * *

1791.

'I weep for the blood that has been spilt ; it is impossible to be too sparing of the lives of our fellow-creatures. Nevertheless, I am glad there is danger. I see nothing else capable of goading you on. It is impossible to rise to freedom, from the midst of corruption, without strong convulsions. They are the salutary crisis of a serious disease. We are in want of a terrible political fever, to carry off our foul humors.'

These, and other letters equally energetic, were rapidly circulated by her husband's political friends ; and many of them found their way into the public journals, particularly the *Patriote François*. Roland and his wife likewise wrote many articles, in favor of a new order of things, in the *Courrier de Lyon*. Madame Roland gave a description of the confederation at Lyons, May 30, 1790, in language so powerful and impressive, that more than sixty thousand copies of it were sold.

In 1791, Roland was chosen, by the city of Lyons, deputy extraordinary to the Constituent Assembly ; the manufacturers of that place were then in a wretched

state, and twenty thousand workmen were starving.—Madame Roland accompanied her husband to Paris, where they arrived on the 20th of February; they remained there seven months, in habits of close companionship with Brissot, Buzot, Robespierre, &c. Madame Roland says, 'I had been five years absent from the place of my nativity. I had watched the progress of the revolution, and the labors of the assembly; I had studied the characters and talents of its leading members, with an interest not to be easily conceived by those who are unacquainted with my ardent and active turn of mind. I hastened to attend their sittings. I was vexed to see that dignified habits, purity of language, and polished manners, gave the court-party a kind of superiority in large assemblies; but the strength of reason, the courage of integrity, the fruits of study, and the fluency of the bar, could not fail to secure the triumph of the patriots, if they were all honest, and could but remain united.'

At this period Madame Roland thought Robespierre an honest man, and a true friend of liberty; though she says the kind of reserve, for which he was remarkable, even then gave her pain,—because it seemed like a fear of being seen through, or a distrust of the virtue of others. Of Danton she says, 'No man could make a greater show of zeal in the cause of liberty; but I contemplated his forbidding and atrocious features, and though I tried to overcome my prejudice, I could never associate anything good with such a countenance. Never did a face so strongly express brutal passions, and the most astonishing audacity, half distinguished by a jovial air, and an affectation of simplicity.'

As M. Roland's residence in Paris was a convenient place of rendezvous, different members of the assembly often met there. She says, 'This arrangement suited me perfectly. It made me acquainted with the progress of public affairs, in which I was deeply interested, and favored my taste for political speculation, and the study of mankind. However, I knew very well what part became a woman, and never stepped out of my proper sphere. I employed myself in working, or writing letters, without sharing in the debate. Yet if I despatched ten espistles in an evening, I did not lose a syllable of what they were saying; and more than once I bit my lips, to restrain my impatience to speak. It distressed me that men of sense should pass three or four hours in light and frivolous chit-chat, without coming to any conclusion. Good ideas were started, and excellent principles maintained; but on the whole, there was no path marked out, no fixed result, no determinate point, toward which each person should direct his views.—Sometimes, for very vexation, I could have boxed the ears of these philosophers, whose honesty I daily learnt to esteem more and more. Excellent reasoners, learned theorists, were they all; but being totally ignorant of the art of managing mankind, their wit and learning were generally lavished to no end.'

In September, 1791, Roland returned to Lyons, after having obtained all for that city that could be desired. The autumn was employed in the vintage; and as one of the last acts of the Constituent Assembly had been the suppression of the office of Inspectors, it was determined that they should spend the winter in Paris; where Roland intended to claim a pension for forty years' ser-

vice, and where he could have greater facilities for continuing his labors in the Encyclopedia. Before he left Lyons he established there a club similar to the Jacobin club at Paris.

After the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, a new body was immediately organized, called the Legislative Assembly. 'The party which obtained the ascendency in this Assembly was called the *Gironde* party, because some of its principal leaders came from the neighborhood of Bordeaux, which is watered by a river of that name.' Among the leaders were Roland and his wife, Condorcet, Brissot, &c. The Court, alarmed at the increasing strength of the popular factions, thought to pacify the people by appointing Jacobin ministers. The aristocratic party would not have been sorry to have seen the dignity conferred upon men who were base enough to become their tools, or weak enough to be objects of derision. The patriots, anxious to avoid this snare, were very solicitous to choose persons of strong abilities and undoubted integrity. Under such circumstances their attention was fixed upon M. Roland. His own courage did not shrink from the arduous task, and his wife's ambition was gratified by a proposal that conferred so much distinction. In March, 1792, he became Minister of the Interior. The Hotel, formerly occupied by the Comptroller General of Finance, was appropriated to his use ; and Madame Roland presided over the establishment, that had been so splendidly fitted up for Madame Necker, in the days of her glory.

When Roland first presented himself at Court, he dispensed with the usual costume, and appeared in the dress of the Jacobin club—a plain suit of clothes, round

hat, and shoes fastened with ribbon instead of buckles. The king, and those courtiers who thought the salvation of the country depended upon etiquette, were greatly scandalized at this austere republicanism. The master of the ceremonies, stepping up to Dumouriez, and casting a look of alarm upon the new minister, exclaimed, 'O, dear sir! he has no buckles in his shoes!' Dumouriez, who enjoyed a joke, replied, with laughable gravity, 'Mercy upon us! we shall all go to ruin!'

Louis XVI. was however very affable and conciliating in his manner toward the new members of the council. At first, Roland was enchanted with his excellent disposition, and thought the monarch would grant everything that could be required for the good of the people. 'On my faith,' said he, 'if he be not an honest man, he is the greatest knave in the kingdom. It is impossible to be so hypocritical.' To these expressions of confidence, Madame Roland replied, 'I cannot bring myself to believe in the constitutional vocation of a king, born and educated in despotism, and accustomed to arbitrary sway. If Louis is sincerely the friend of a constitution, which restrains his power, he must be virtuous beyond the common race of mortals; and if he were such a man, the events that have led to the revolution could never have occurred.' The troubles on the score of religion increased daily; and the preparations of the enemy called for decisive measures. Roland urged upon the king the necessity of a decree against the priesthood, and the establishment of a camp in the suburbs of Paris. Louis did not positively refuse, but, upon the plea of further consideration, he deferred them from day to day, until his sincerity was greatly suspec-

ted. Roland remonstrated in the strongest and most spirited manner. Thinking the public welfare in danger, and that patriot ministers were bound to provide means for its salvation, he at last proposed to his colleagues that a letter should be written to the king, full of republican truths, expressed warmly and without disguise. The members of the council were afraid to hazard so bold a measure; and Roland thought it incumbent upon his integrity and courage to step forward alone. This famous letter to Louis XVI. was written by Madame Roland. It was placed in the king's hands on the 11th of June; and the next day, the Minister of the Interior and his colleagues were dismissed from office. Madame Roland, with her usual daring, advised that a copy of the offensive letter should be immediately sent to the National Assembly, that the cause of Roland's dismission might be known. This letter obtained prodigious popularity. The Assembly ordered it to be printed and sent to all the departments, accompanied with expressions of national regret at the discharge of the ministry. Roland became the idol of the patriotic party. After the dreadful catastrophe of the 10th of August, 1792, he was again called to the ministry by the triumphant faction.

Of her way of life at this period, Madame Roland thus speaks: 'As soon as my husband was in the ministry, I came to a fixed determination neither to pay nor receive visits, nor invite any female to my table. I had no great sacrifice to make; for, not residing at Paris, my acquaintance was not extensive. Besides, I had never kept a great deal of company; my love of study is as great as my detestation of cards, and the society of

silly people affords me no amusement. Accustomed to domestic retirement, I shared the labors of Roland, and pursued the studies most suited to my own particular taste.

'The establishment of so severe a rule served to keep up my accustomed style of life, and to prevent the inconveniences, which an interested crowd is sure to throw in the way of people occupying important posts. Twice a week I gave a dinner to some of the ministers, a few members of the Assembly, and other persons with whom my husband wished to converse. Business was talked of in my presence, because I had not the rage of interfering, and was never surrounded by new acquaintances, whose presence might excite distrust. From all the spacious apartments, I chose the smallest parlor for myself, and converted it into a study, by moving into it my library and desk. It frequently happened that Roland's friends, when they wanted to talk confidentially, instead of going to his apartment, where he was usually surrounded, would come to my room and ask me to send for him. By these means, I found myself drawn into the vortex of public affairs, without intrigue, or idle curiosity; and as we had ever a perfect intercommunity of knowledge and opinions, Roland talked to me in private of political measures with entire confidence. During twelve years, I shared in my husband's intellectual labors as I did in his repasts; because one was as natural to me as the other. If any of his works met with a flattering reception, on account of any particular gracefulness of style, I shared his satisfaction without remarking that it was my own composition. Not

unfrequently he brought himself to believe that he had been in a happier mood than usual when he had written a passage, which in reality proceeded from *my* pen. If an occasion occurred for the expression of great and striking truths, I poured my whole soul upon the paper. I loved my country.—I knew no interest, no passion, that came in competition with my enthusiasm for liberty. The language that comes directly from the heart is necessarily pure and pathetic ; and it was very natural that such effusions should be preferable to the laborious teeming of a secretary's brain. Why should not a woman act as secretary to her husband, without depriving him of his merit ? It is well known that ministers cannot do everything themselves ; and surely it is better for the wives of statesmen to make draughts of letters, of official despatches, and of proclamations, than employ their time in soliciting and intriguing first for one *friend* and then for another ; in the very nature of things one of these employments excludes the other. I make these remarks, because a great many people are willing to allow me a little merit, on purpose that they may deny it to my husband ; while many others suppose me to have had a kind of influence in public affairs entirely discordant with my turn of mind. Studious habits and a taste for literature led me to participate in Roland's labors while he remained a private individual ; my existence being devoted to his happiness, I applied myself to such things as best pleased him. If he wrote treatises on the arts, I did the same, though the subject was tedious to me. If he wished to write an essay for some academy, we sat down to write in concert, that we might afterward compare our productions, choose the

best, or compress them into one. If he had written homilies, I should have written homilies also. I never interfered with his administration; but if a circular letter, or an important state-paper, were wanted, we talked over the matter with our usual freedom; and, impressed with his ideas, and teeming with my own, I sometimes took up the pen, which I had more leisure to conduct than he had. Our principles and turn of mind being the same, my husband ran no risk in passing through my hands. Without me, Roland would have been quite as good a minister; for his knowledge, his activity, and his integrity were all his own: but with me he attracted more attention; because I infused into his writings that mixture of spirit and gentleness, of authoritative reason and seducing sentiment, which is perhaps only to be found in the language of a woman, who has a clear head and a feeling heart. If my compositions could be of use, it afforded me greater pleasure than it would have done to have been known as their author. I am avaricious of happiness, but I do not stand in need of glory; nor can I find any part to perform in this world that suits me, but that of providence. I allow the malicious to look upon this remark as a piece of impertinence, which it must somewhat resemble; those who know me will see nothing in it but what is sincere, like myself.

'I was generally so much occupied with the importance of the subject in which we were engaged, that my thoughts did not even revert to myself. Once, however, I recollect being diverted by a curious coincidence of circumstances. I was writing to the Pope, to claim the French artists imprisoned at Rome. — A letter to the

sovereign Pontiff in the name of the Executive Council of France, sketched secretly by a woman, in her humble closet, appeared to me so strange a thing, that I laughed heartily when I had finished it. The pleasure of such contrasts consisted in their secrecy; and that was necessarily less attainable when the eye of a clerk surveyed the hand-writing he copied. If those who found me out, had formed a right judgment of things, they would have saved me from a sort of celebrity to which I never aspired; and instead of spending my time to refute their falsehoods, I might now be reading Montaigne, painting a flower, or playing an ariette. Household cares I never neglected; but I cannot comprehend how a woman of method and activity can have her attention engrossed by them. If the family be large, there are the greater number of persons to divide the cares; nothing is wanted but a moderate share of vigilance, and a proper distribution of employments. In the different situations in which I have been placed, nothing has been done without my orders; yet when I have had the most to superintend, I have never consumed more than two hours of the day. People who know how to employ themselves, always find leisure moments, while those who do nothing are forever in a hurry. I have seen notable women, who were insupportable to the world and to their husbands, by a fatiguing preöccupation about their trifling concerns. I think a wife should superintend everything herself, without saying a word about it; and with such command of temper, and management of time, as will leave her the means of pleasing by her good-humor, intelligence, and the grace natural to her sex. It is much the same in governments

as in families; those statesmen, as well as housewives, who make a great bustle about the difficulties they are in, are the very ones, who are too indolent, too awkward, or too ignorant to remove them.'

A life so full of changes as that of Madame Roland, of course afforded striking contrasts. She tells us that one day as she was stepping out of the spacious dining room, which the elegant Calonne had fitted up, she met a grey-headed gentleman, who bowed very low, and begged her to obtain for him an interview with the Minister of the Interior. She afterward found that this gentleman was M. Haudry, whose relations had invited her to dine with their servants; he had squandered his fortune in dissipation, and came to ask M. Roland to procure him a place in a manufactory.

But situations the most elevated are often far from being the most enviable. Base and selfish men joined the popular party, ready to serve it for money, or to betray it the moment it became weak. Such men could not but clash with Roland, who was conscientious in his motives, and unyielding in his opinions. To this was added the immense accumulation of labor devolving upon a public officer, in those distracted times, and the difficulty of finding men of probity and skill to assist him.

Madame Roland says, 'It seems as if France were destitute of *men*; their scarcity has been truly surprising in this revolution, in which scarcely anything but pigmies have appeared. I do not mean, however, that there was any want of wit, of learning, of accomplishments, or of philosophy. These ingredients were never so common — it is the bright blaze of an expiring taper. But as to that firmness of mind, which Rousseau calls

the first attribute of a hero, supported by that soundness of judgment, which knows how to set a true value upon things, and by those extensive views, which penetrate into futurity, altogether constituting the character of a great man, they were sought for everywhere, and were scarcely to be found. Before I became acquainted with public affairs I was as distrustful of myself as a novice in her cloister. I thought that men, who spoke with more decision than myself, were more able. It required the bustle of a revolution, and an opportunity to make comparisons among a crowd of distinguished men, to enable me to perceive that the bench on which I was standing was not likely to break down with the throng. The conviction tended rather to lower my estimate of the species, than to elevate the opinion of myself.'

The admission of Danton into the councils of government was, as Madame Roland had foreseen, a source of perpetual vexation and distress to the true patriots. He had been admitted from the bad political maxim, that an unprincipled man may be used as a tool, to bring about good purposes from wrong motives. Those who disliked his proceedings, deemed it expedient to tolerate him, because he might prove a dangerous enemy. Selfish and insidious, he availed himself of his position, and placed his vile creatures in almost every department. As his power increased, he showed more openly his dislike of Roland, who was too honest to be tampered with, and too fearless to be intimidated. They found Madame Roland had no weak side, through which her husband could be assailed, and they alike dreaded her frankness, her penetration, and her talents. It is hardly possible to suppose a situation more painful than that

of an upright man in power compelled to witness abuses he cannot prevent, and to have the appearance of sanctioning the crimes his soul abhors. Roland's health was impaired by it. He was unable to eat or sleep. Yet he deemed it his duty not to desert his post so long as there was a chance of checking the tide of anarchy.

The massacres of the 2d of September filled him with horror. He wrote a letter to the Assembly, as famous as his address to the king; it proved that he alike detested the tyranny of a monarch and the tyranny of a mob.

The department of the Somme, in which Roland had long resided, elected him a member of the Convention; in consequence of which, he thought proper to offer to the Assembly a resignation of his office in the ministry. This proposal produced a good deal of agitation. Many of the members were alarmed at the idea of taking from the helm a man of understanding and tried integrity. A motion was made, that he should be urged to remain in office; upon which Danton observed, 'If we invite him, we must extend the invitation to Madame. I am well aware of the virtues of the minister; but we have need of men, who can see without the help of their wives.'

The resignation was not accepted; and a crowd of members repaired to his house, beseeching him not to quit the ministry,—urging it upon him as a sacrifice he owed to his country. News was brought that his election as member of the Convention was void, because it had been made in lieu of another, erroneously supposed to be null; this circumstance was known to Danton's party, but they endeavored to keep it concealed, until

they could get Roland out of the ministry. Under these circumstances, the Minister of the Interior resolved to remain at his dangerous post. The difficulties and perils of his situation increased daily. The Mountain Party, headed by Robespierre, Danton, and Marat, gained its awful ascendency. The influence of moderate and enlightened patriots was an insufficient barrier against the ferocity of a lawless banditti. Roland and his party tried to stop the frightful increase of crime, and consequently were immediately branded by the fierce Mountaineers, as conspirators against the liberties of France. They ridiculed the chimera of a Universal Commonwealth, and a Convention composed of deputies from all parts of the world, and therefore they were denounced as vile corrupters of public opinion. They dared to say that Greece was composed of small confederate republics, and that the United States exhibited the best model of a good social organization — and they were immediately represented as federalists, men ambitious of supreme power, the secret friends of England, &c. &c.

The social dinners, which Madame Roland could not well avoid giving to public men, were represented as sumptuous feasts, where she, like a new Circe, corrupted all who were unfortunate enough to partake of her banquet. On the 7th of December, she was called before the Convention to answer to certain accusations ; and the sincerity and eloquence of her replies compelled her worst enemies to listen and admire. But in such times, innocence and talent could not produce any abiding effect. When artful politicians courted the scum of the populace, by cutting throats, drinking, swearing, and dressing like sailors, it was deemed sufficient villany to

profess morality, and retain politeness. The friends of Roland, having ascertained that desperate men were constantly lurking about his house, urged him to remove his family. At one time, Madame Roland was convinced that it would be better for her to retire to Ville Franche, and leave her husband to effect his escape, (should such a step become necessary,) unencumbered by his wife and child; but her prevailing feeling was to remain with him, and share the worst fate that might befal him. Her friends told her she must leave Paris in disguise; and the dress of a peasant girl was brought for that purpose. The sight of it aroused all her fortitude — she indignantly threw it aside, exclaiming, 'I am ashamed of the part you would persuade me to act. I will neither disguise myself, nor go out of the way. If I am to be murdered, it shall be in my own mansion. I owe my country an example of firmness, and I will give it. I cannot suppose there are wretches, who could be easily induced to violate the asylum of a man in public office; and if there be men so depraved, the perpetration of such an act would be productive of beneficial consequences.'

Madame Roland was, however, so well aware of her danger, that she never slept without a pistol under her pillow; not to kill those who might come to assassinate them, but to defend herself from outrages, of which the Revolution afforded too many examples.'

The deadly hostility between the Girondins and the Mountaineers increased daily. The former are accused of wishing to establish an aristocracy of talent on the ruins of the aristocracy of rank; the latter were for lev-

elling all distinctions, even to breaking down the boundaries between vice and virtue. The Girondins, conscious of upright motives, were no doubt too stern and unconciliating toward their opponents, and too irascible in debate : but the Mountaineers were a violent, reckless set of demagogues, whose most proper appellation would have been the Hurra-Party. Having no regard for the courtesies of life, the principles of truth, or the decencies of language, they attacked their enemies in the most profligate and shameless manner. Placards were posted in the streets, in which Roland was not only accused of corruption, but the dagger was still more effectually struck at his heart by open charges against his virtuous wife. At last, finding it impossible to allay the tempest, and weary of being the member of a council without energy, and of a government without power, Roland gave in his accounts to the Convention, and asked his dismission. His request was granted. Marat proposed that he should not be allowed to quit Paris. The ex-Minister of the Interior, relying on the exactness of his accounts, demanded a report on his administration; but his enemies knew his integrity too well, to allow him such an advantage. His ruin was resolved upon, and his friends were too weak to prevent it.

At the time of the insurrection of the 31st of May, an attempt was made to arrest him. Madame Roland thus describes the scene :

'It was half after five in the evening, when six men armed came to our house. One of them read to Roland an order of the revolutionary committee, by the author-

ity of which they came to apprehend him. 'I know no law,' said Roland, 'which constitutes the authority you cite to me, and I shall obey no orders proceeding from it. If you employ violence, I can only oppose to you the resistance of a man of my years; but I shall protest against it to the last moment.'—'I have no order to employ violence,' replied the person, 'and I will leave my colleagues here, while I go and report your answer to the council of the commune.'

'Immediateiy it occurred to me, that it would be well to announce this circumstance to the Convention with some noise, in order to prevent the arrest of Roland, or to obtain his prompt release, if this should be carried into execution. To communicate the thought to my husband, write a letter to the president, and set out, was the business of a few minutes. My servant was absent. I left a friend, who was in the house, with Roland, and stept alone into a hackney-coach, which I ordered to proceed as fast as possible to the Carrousel. The court of the Tuileries was filled with armed men. I crossed, and flew through the midst of them like a bird. I was dressed in a morning gown, and had put on a black shawl, and a veil. On my arrival at the doors of the outer halls, which were all shut, I found sentinels, who allowed no one to enter, or sent me by turns from one door to another. In vain I insisted on admission. At length I bethought myself of employing such language as might have been uttered by some devotee of Robespierre: "But, citizens, in this day of salvation for our country, in the midst of those traitors we have to fear, you know not of what importance some notes I have to

transmit to the president may be. Let me at least see one of the messengers, that I may entrust them to him."

'The door opened, and I entered into the petitioners' hall. I inquired for a messenger of the house. "Wait till one comes out," said one of the inner sentinels. A quarter of an hour passed away. I perceived Rôze, the person who brought me the decree of the Convention, which invited me to repair to the bar, on occasion of the ridiculous accusation of Viard, whom I overwhelmed with confusion. Now I solicited permission to appear there, and announced Roland to be in danger, with which the public weal was connected. But circumstances were no longer the same, though my rights were equal. Before invited, now a suppliant, could I expect the same success? Rôze took charge of my letter; understood the subject of my impatience; and repaired to lay it on the table, and urge its being read. An hour elapsed. I walked hastily backwards and forwards; every time the door opened my eyes were cast towards the hall, but it was immediately shut by the guard. A fearful noise was heard at intervals. Rôze again appeared.—"Well?"—'Nothing has been done yet. A tumult I cannot describe prevails in the assembly. Some petitioners, now at the bar, demand the *two-and-twenty* to be apprehended. I have just assisted Ribaud to slip out without being seen; they are not willing he should make the report of the commission of *twelve*; he has been threatened; several others are escaping; there is no knowing what will be the event.'—"Who is the president now?"—'Héraut Séchelles.'—"Ah! my letter will not be read. Send some deputy to me, with whom I can speak a few words."—'Whom?'—"Indeed I have

been little acquainted, or have little esteem for any, but those who are proscribed. Tell Vergniaux I am inquiring for him."

Rôze went in quest of him. After a considerable time he appeared. We talked together for ten minutes. He went back into the hall, returned, and said to me, 'In the present state of the assembly, I dare not flatter you; you have little to hope. If you get admission to the bar, you may obtain a little more favor as a woman; but the Convention can do no more good.'—"It can do every thing," exclaimed I; "for the majority of Paris seeks only to know what it has to do. If I were admitted, I would venture to say, what you could not, without exposing yourself to an accusation. I fear nothing; and if I cannot save Roland, I will utter with energy truths, which will not be useless to the republic. Inform your worthy colleagues; a burst of courage may have a great effect, and at least will set a great example." In fact, I was in that temper of mind, which imparts eloquence. Warm with indignation, superior to all fear, my bosom glowing for my country, the ruin of which I foresaw, everything dear to me in the world exposed to the utmost danger, feeling strongly, expressing my sentiments with fluency, too proud not to utter them with dignity, I had subjects in which I was highly interested to discuss, possessed some means of defending them, and was in a singular situation for doing it with advantage.

"But at any rate, your letter cannot be read this hour or two. A plan of a decree, forming six articles, is going to be discussed. Petitioners, deputed by the sections, wait at the bar. Think what an attempt!'—

"I will go home then, to hear what has passed; and will immediately return; so tell our friends."—'Most of them are absent. They show themselves courageous, when they are here; but they are deficient in assiduity.'—"That is unfortunately too true."

'I quitted Vergniaux: I flew to Louvet's: I wrote a note to inform him of what was going on, and what I foresaw. I flung myself into a hackney-coach, and ordered it home. The poor horses answered not the speed of my wishes. Soon we were met by some battalions, whose march stopped us: I jumped out of the coach, paid the coachman, rushed through the ranks, and made off. This was near the Louvre. I ran to our house, which was opposite St. Côme, in Harp-street. The porter whispered me, that Roland was gone into the landlord's, at the bottom of the court. Thither I repaired, in a profuse perspiration. A glass of wine was brought me, and I was told that the bearer of the *mandate* of arrest having returned, without being able to procure a hearing at the council, Roland had persisted in protesting against his orders; and that these good people had demanded his protest in writing, and had then withdrawn: after which Roland went through the landlord's apartment, and got out of the house the back way. I did the same to find him, to inform him of what I had done, and to acquaint him with the steps I meant to pursue. At the first house to which I repaired, I found him not: in the second I did. From the solitariness of the streets, which were illuminated, I presumed it was late; yet this did not prevent my design of returning to the convention. There I would have appeared ignorant of Roland's escape, and spoken as I before intended. I

was about to set off on foot, without being conscious, that it was past ten o'clock, and that I was out that day for the first time since my illness, which demanded rest and the bath. A hackney-coach was brought me. On approaching the Carrousel, I saw nothing more of the armed force: two pieces of cannon, and a few men, were still at the gate of the national palace: I went up to it, and found the sitting was dissolved!

'What, on the day of an insurrection, when the sound of the alarm-bell scarcely ceases to strike the ear, when forty thousand men in arms surrounded the convention only two hours before, and petitioners threatened its members from the bar, the assembly is not permanent! — Surely then it is completely subjugated! it has done everything that it was ordered! The *revolutionary power* is so mighty, that the convention dares not oppose it and it has no need of the convention!

'"Citizens," said I to some sans-culottes collected round a cannon, "has everything gone well?" — "O wonderfully! they embraced, and sung the hymn of the Marseillese, there, under the tree of liberty." — "What then, is the right side appeased?" — "Faith, it was obliged to listen to reason." — "And what of the committee of twelve?" — "It is kicked into the ditch." — "And the *twenty-two?*" — "The municipality will cause them to be taken up." — "Good: but can it?" — "Is it not the sovereign? It was necessary it should, to set those b——— of traitors right, and support the commonwealth." — "But will the departments be well pleased to see their representatives * * * * *" — "What are you talking of? the Parisians do nothing but in concert with the departments; they have said so to the

convention." — "That is not too clear, for, to know their will, the primary assemblies should have met." — "Were they wanting on the 10th of August? Did not the departments approve what Paris did then? They do the same now; it is Paris that saves them."—"That ruins them rather, perhaps."

'I had crossed the court, and arrived at my hackney-coach, as I finished this dialogue with an old sans-culotte, no doubt well paid to tutor the dupes. A pretty dog pressed close at my heels: — "Is the poor creature your's?" said the coachman to me, with a tone of sensibility very rare among his fellows, which struck me extremely. — "No: I am not acquainted with him," answered I gravely, as if I were speaking of a man, and already thinking of something else: "you will set me down at the galleries of the Louvre." There I intended to call on a friend, with whom I would consult on the means of getting Roland out of Paris. We had not gone a dozen yards before the coach stopped. "What is the matter?" said I to the coachman. — "Ah, he has left me, like a fool; and I wanted to keep him for my little boy. He would have been highly pleased with him. Wheugh! Wheugh! Wheugh!"— I recollected the dog: it was gratifying to me to have for a coachman, at such an hour, a man of a good heart, of feeling, and a father. "Endeavor to catch him," said I: "you shall put him into the coach, and I will take care of him for you."— The good man, quite delighted, caught the dog, opened the door, and gave him to me for a companion. The poor animal appeared sensible, that he had found protection and an asylum: I was greatly caressed by him, and I thought of that tale of Sandi, in

which is described an old man, weary of his fellow creatures, and disgusted with their passions, who retired to a wood, in which he constructed himself a dwelling, of which he sweetened the solitude by means of some animals, who repaid his cares with testimonies of affection, and with a species of gratitude, to which he confined himself, for want of meeting with its like among mankind.

'Pasquier had just gone to bed. He rose: I proposed to him my plan. We agreed that he should come to me the next day after seven o'clock, and I would inform him where to find his friend. I returned to my coach: it was stopped by the sentry, at the post of the Woman of Samaria. "Have a little patience:" whispered the coachman to me, turning back on his seat: "it is the custom at this time of night."—The sergeant came and opened the door. "Who is here?"—"A woman."—"Whence do you come?"—"From the Convention."—"It is very true:" added the coachman, as if he feared, I should not be credited.—"Whither are you going?"—"Home."—"Have you no bundles?"—"I have nothing. See."—"But the assembly has broken up."—"Yes: at which I am very sorry, for I had a petition to make."—"A woman! at this hour! it is very strange: it is very imprudent."—"No doubt it is not a very common occurrence: I must have had strong reasons for it."—"But, madam, alone!"—"How, sir, alone! Do you not see I have innocence and truth with me? what more is necessary?"—"I must submit to your reasons."—"And you do well:" replied I, in a gentler tone; "for they are good."

'The horses were so fatigued, that the coachman was

obliged to pull them by the bridle, to get them up the hill, in the street in which I resided. I got home : I dismissed him : and I had ascended eight or ten steps, when a man, close at my heels, who had slipped in at the gate unperceived by the porter, begged me to conduct him to citizen Roland.—" To his apartments, with all my heart, if you have any thing of service to him to impart ; but to him is impossible."—" This evening he will certainly be apprehended."—" They must be very dexterous, who accomplish it."—" You give me great pleasure ; for it is an honest citizen who accosts you." " I am glad of it," said I, and went on, without well knowing what to think of the adventure.'

While Madame Roland was at the Convention, trying to arouse her husband's irresolute friends, he made his escape to a neighboring house, where she had an interview with him after she returned. The officers who again came to arrest him, were much enraged. Roland, however, eluded their vigilance, and reached Rouen in safety, where he remained concealed till a week before his death. It seems probable that Madame Roland might likewise have effected her escape, had she taken the resolution promptly ; but heart-sick at the wretched condition of her country, she valued life less than she had done in the proud enthusiasm of her patriotic hopes ; and anxious to divert the fury of the populace from her husband, she made no effort to find a shelter from the storm. 'It would have cost me more trouble,' says she, 'to escape from injustice, than it does to submit to it.'

The National Seal was put upon their furniture. During this scene the rooms were crowded with the mob ; and the atmosphere became so filled with noisome ex-

halations, that she was obliged to seek the window for fresh air. She was hurried away to prison on the charge of being an accomplice with the conspirators against the liberties of France. An armed force followed the coach; and as it passed along, some of the women among the populace cried out, 'Away with her to the guillotine!' One of the commissioners asked, 'shall we close the blinds of the carriage?' Madame Roland replied, "No, gentlemen. I do not fear the eyes of the populace. Innocence should never assume the guise of crime." The officer answered, 'Madam, you have more strength of mind than many men. You wait patiently for justice!'—"Justice!" she exclaimed; "were justice done, I should not be here. But if I am destined for the scaffold, I shall walk to it with the same firmness and tranquillity with which I now go to prison. I never feared anything but guilt. But my heart bleeds for my country. I regret my mistake in supposing it qualified for liberty and happiness."

Having lodged her in the Abbey Prison, the Commissioners withdrew, leaving very severe orders with the keeper. Before they went, they took occasion to observe that Roland's flight was a proof of his guilt; to which she replied, 'There is something so abominable in persecuting a man who has rendered such important services in the cause of liberty, whose conduct has always been so open, and whose accounts are so clear, that he is fully justified in avoiding the last outrages of envy and malice. Just as Aristides, and as severe as Cato, he is indebted to his virtues for his enemies. Let them satiate their fury on me—I defy its power, and devote myself to death. He ought to save himself for

the sake of a country to which he may yet do *good.*'— An awkward and confused bow was the only answer the officers thought fit to make.

Neither promises nor threats could induce her to reveal the secret of her husband's retreat. Her constant reply was, 'I scorn to tell a falsehood; I know his plans; but I neither ought nor choose to tell them.'

Eudora was left by her mother to the care of the weeping domestics. "Those people love you," observed one of the Commissioners. 'I never had those about me who did not,' she replied. She alone remained calm and proud, amid the most touching demonstrations of affection and distress. Soon after her departure, the kind-hearted Bosc, who had long been a friend to the Minister and his wife, took upon himself the responsibility of providing for Eudora; and immediately placed her with a worthy woman, who watched over her with truly maternal tenderness.

By the kindness of the keeper and his wife, Madame Roland was made as comfortable as a prisoner could be; the woman expressed the regret she always felt when female prisoners were brought in; adding, "all of them have not your serene countenance, madam."

Madame Roland's first care was to arrange her little apartment with neatness and order. She had Thomson's Seasons in her pocket; and she procured Hume's History and Sheridan's Dictionary, in order to pursue her study of the English language. While she was making those peaceful preparations, the drums were beating, the alarm-bells were ringing — and in the night she was continually awakened by the thundering voices of the

patroles under her window, calling out, 'Who goes there?—Kill him!—Guard!—Patrole!'

Firm and unmoved in the anticipation of her own fate, her heart often bled at the thought of what her friends were suffering on her account; particularly 'Roland proscribed and persecuted, and compelled to drink the bitter cup of his wife's imprisonment.' By the connivance of the compassionate keeper, several of her friends gained access to her. A favorite maid, who had lived with her many years, was willing to devote herself to her even unto death; and through her she frequently conveyed her opinions and wishes to the political friends of her husband. By their advice she wrote an eloquent Address to the National Convention, which concludes thus: 'Lastly, I demand of the Convention a Report on the accounts of that irreproachable man, who seems destined to give Europe a terrible lesson of virtue proscribed by the blindness of infuriate prejudice. If to have shared the strictness of his principles, the energy of his mind, the ardor of his love for liberty, be a crime—then indeed I acknowledge myself guilty, and await my punishment. Pronounce your sentence, legislators! France, freedom, the fate of the republic, and of yourselves, depend on your decision.'

Two other addresses were written by the prisoner, to demand a statement of the crimes for which she had been arrested, and to insist upon an open and impartial trial; one was addressed to the Minister of Justice, the other to the Minister of the Home Department. Hearing that their Section (that of Beaurepaire) had expressed sentiments highly favorable to Roland, she resolved

to place herself under its protection. In her letter she says, 'If the section think it not beneath its dignity to plead the cause of suffering innocence, it will be easy to send a deputation to the bar of the Convention to make known my complaints, and to add weight to my arguments; I submit this point to its wisdom; I add no entreaties. Those who love justice do not need petitions; and innocence and truth should never resort to supplication.'

The section were desirous of affording protection; but their timid efforts afforded no barrier to the overwhelming power of the Mountain Party. Madame Roland, in the meantime, completely gained the hearts of her keeper and his attendants, by her patient cheerfulness. She waited entirely upon herself, because she preferred to be employed, and because she did not expect to find in a prison the scrupulous neatness which her habits required; yet unwilling to deprive the servants of their customary perquisites, she frequently made them presents. Her food was as simple as the repasts of an anchorite; but despising *useless* economy, the money saved in this way was distributed among her fellow prisoners. The first five weeks were employed in writing Historic Notices of the scenes she had witnessed, and the characters with whom she had associated. The person to whom she intrusted these documents was placed in great peril, and she was led to suppose that he had destroyed them to secure his own safety. The idea seems to have distressed her more than any of her previous misfortunes. She busied herself to repair the loss; and as both sets of papers were

afterward published with her memoirs, there is of course a good deal of repetition.

Her friends, being aware of her passionate love of flowers, found means to send them to her frequently. She says, 'The sight of a flower always delighted my imagination, and flattered my senses, to an inexpressible degree. Under the happy shelter of my paternal roof, I was happy from infancy with my flowers and books; in the narrow confines of a prison, with books and flowers, I can forget my own misfortunes, and the injustice of mankind.' The jailer used to admire the pleasure she took in arranging her bouquets; he often said to her, 'I shall always call this room the *Pavilion of Flora*, in remembrance of you.' The next occupant of that apartment was her friend Brissot; and the next was the celebrated Charlotte Corday.

The promised examination was deferred. She says, 'However, I sometimes received visits from administrators, with foolish faces and dirty ribands, some of whom said they belonged to the police, and others to I know not what; violent *sans-culottes*, with filthy hair, who came to know if the prisoners were satisfied with their treatment. They asked, 'Is your health impaired? Does solitude affect your spirits?'—'No. I am well and cheerful. *Ennui* is the disease of hearts without feeling, and of minds without resources. All I ask is an examination, that I may know why I am imprisoned.'—'In a revolution there is so much to do, that there is not time for everything.' 'A woman said to King Philip, 'if you have not time to do justice, you have no time to be a king.' Tell the sovereign people

the same things; or rather the arbitrary authorities by whom the people are misled.''

Madame Roland would never comply with the popular whim of substituting the word *Citizen* for the customary appellation of *Monsieur*. The Jacobin officers, who came to look at her in her cage, were highly incensed at her obstinacy in accosting them with a title they had branded as aristocratic.

On the 24th of June, two men came to inform her that she was at liberty; and before noon she bade farewell to the kind jailer and his wife. The following is her account of this cruel mockery: 'I drove home to leave a few things there, intending to proceed immediately to the house of the worthy people, who had so generously protected my daughter. I quitted the hackney-coach with that activity which never allowed me to get out of a carriage without jumping, passed under the gateway like a bird, and said cheerfully to the porter as I went by, 'Good morning, Lamarre!' I had scarcely put my foot upon the steps, when two men who had followed me closely, called out, '*Citoyenne* Roland!' —'What do you wish?'—'In the name of the law, we arrest you!'—Those who have feelings, can imagine something of what I felt at that moment.' She asked permission to go to her landlord's house on some business; and the officers followed her thither. Here she avowed her resolution of putting herself under the protection of her section. Her landlord's son, with all the warmth and indignation of youth, immediately offered to carry a message for her. He was afterward dragged to the scaffold for this act of generosity, and his father died of grief. Two commissioners of her sec-

tion came and attended her to the mayor's. She remained guarded in the antichamber, while the discussion went on with increasing warmth; in vain she pleaded her right to be present at a debate of which she was the subject. But when a police-officer came to take her into custody, she set the door of the office wide open, and exclaimed aloud, 'Commissioners of the section of Beaurepaire! I give you notice they are taking me to prison!' '*We cannot help it*,' was the reply; 'But the section will not forget you; you shall have a public examination.' Noise and fury left no chance for reason to be heard: She was conveyed to the prison of *Sainte Pelagie*. The wing appropriated to females was divided into long narrow corridors, on one side of which were very small cells; one of which Madame Roland occupied. Under the same roof, upon the same line, and separated only by a very thin partition, were murderers, and women of the town; and in the morning, (the only time when the doors were opened) this scum of the earth collected in the corridors. Under such circumstances, Madame Roland, of course, confined herself very strictly to her cells; but the thinness of the partitions compelled her to hear the blasphemous and lascivious conversation of these wretches. To make the state of things worse, the apartments occupied by the men had windows fronting the cells occupied by these abandoned women; and during the whole day she could not raise her eyes to the windows without witnessing some specimen of human depravity. Even in the remotest corner of her noisome cell she could not shut her ears against disgusting language. She says, 'Such

was the dwelling reserved for the virtuous wife of an honest man! Who can wonder at my contempt of life? Who cannot understand that death itself had charms. Such are the signs of liberty given by men, who, in the *Champ de Mars*, send up birds carrying streamers, to announce to the inhabitants of the upper regions the freedom and felicity of the earth.'

The jailer's wife, impressed with the serene dignity of her manners, invited her to pass the days in her little parlor. A piano was brought, with which she sometimes wiled away the lingering hours; and her friends still found means to cheer her with her favorite flowers. Hope, for a while, revived her patriotic zeal; for the rising of several departments announced the indignation of the people, and threatened the overthrow of Robespierre. She was not, however, suffered to enjoy the external means of comfort which had been offered her. The inspectors of the prisons severely reprimanded the jailer's wife for her kindness, telling her it was her business to maintain equality. Thus Madame Roland was compelled to return to the fetid air of the corridor, sadly illuminated by a lamp, the smoke of which suffocated the whole neighborhood.

True to the firmness and consistency of her character, she comforted the jailer's wife by the cheerful resignation with which she submitted to the change. In the morning she read English in Thomson's Seasons, and Shaftsbury's Essay on Virtue. She then amused herself with drawing until dinner-time; speaking of the pleasure she found in this employment, she urges the necessity of acquiring accomplishments as a resource in solitude and sorrow. The afternoons she devoted to

Plutarch and Tacitus. The latter inspired her with passionate admiration. She says, 'If fate had allowed me to live, I believe I should have been ambitious of but one thing; and that would have been to write the Annals of the Present Age. I cannot go to sleep till I have read a portion of Tacitus. It seems to me that we see things in the same light, and that, in time, and with a subject equally rich, it would not have been impossible for me to imitate his style.'

It was some alleviation to her situation, that Robespierre filled the neighboring corridors with virtuous women; like her, the victims of the most abominable tyranny that ever disgraced the earth. Some of these ladies were the wives of Roland's political friends. Their fortunes were confiscated to the nation, and they often suffered for the common necessaries of life. Madame Roland being unable to meet her few and simple wants, asked one of her former domestics to sell some empty bottles in her cellar, on which the seal of the nation had not been placed; but a great outcry was immediately raised, and a guard placed round the house.

Madame Roland remained in the cell of Sainte Pelagie until the 1st of October. Her friends wished to assist her in making her escape; but she answered, 'I have fixed my resolution to remain here and await my fate; my flight would only exasperate my husband's enemies.'

In prison, surrounded by dangers and alarms of every kind, hourly expecting a summons to the scaffold, she wrote her memoirs. Calumniated on all sides, she was naturally desirous that posterity should grant to

her husband and herself the impartial hearing, which their cotemporaries denied. She says, 'I shall exhibit the fair and unfavorable side of my character with equal freedom. He who dares not speak well of himself is generally a coward, knowing and dreading the evil that may be said of him; and he, who hesitates to confess his faults, has neither spirit to vindicate, nor virtue to repair them. Thus frank with respect to myself, I shall not be scrupulous with regard to others. Father, mother, friends, husband—I shall paint them all in their proper colors; at least as they appeared to me.'

As these memoirs followed the current of her thoughts, without any order, they are naturally interspersed with apostrophes, and reflections, of which the following are a sample: 'My much revered husband, grown weak and weary of the world, and sunk into premature old age, which you preserve by painful efforts from the pursuit of the assassins — shall I ever be permitted to see you again, to pour the balm of consolation into your sorely bruised heart? — How much longer am I destined to remain a witness of the desolation of my native land, and the degradation of my countrymen? Assailed by these afflicting images, I cannot steel my heart against sorrow: a few scalding tears start from my heavy eyes: and the pen, that passed so lightly over my youthful days, is suffered to lie idle.

* * * * * * *

'Thou Supreme Being! Principle of everything that is good and great! Thou, in whose existence I believe, because I must needs emanate from something

better than what I see around me — I shall soon be reunited to thine essence.'

* * * * * * *

'All, whom heaven in its bounty has given me for friends, I beseech you cherish my orphan. A young plant violently torn from its native soil, where it would, perchance, have been withered, or bruised by the spoiler; but you have placed her in a kindly shelter, beneath a reviving shade. May her virtues repay your care! * * * And she, my darling girl, cannot appear in the streets with her beautiful fair hair, and her youthful bashfulness, but she is pointed at by hirelings, as the child of a conspirator.'

'Farewell, my dear child, my worthy husband, my faithful servant, and my good friends — Farewell, thou sun, whose resplendent beams used to shed serenity over my soul, while they recalled it to the skies — Farewell, ye solitary fields, which I have so often contemplated with emotion — And you, ye rustic inhabitants of Thezée, who were wont to bless my presence, whom I attended in sickness, whose labors I alleviated, whose indigence I relieved, farewell. — Farewell, peaceful retirements, where I enriched my mind with moral truths, and learned, in the silence of meditation, to govern my passions, and despise the vanity of the world.

'Splendid chimeras! from which I have reaped so much delight, you are all dispelled by the horrible corruptions of this vast city. Farewell, my country! Sublime illusions, generous sacrifices, hope, and happiness, farewell!'

While in prison, she wrote a very remarkable letter to Robespierre, from which I cannot forbear taking an

extract :—' I regarded the first calumnies invented against me as contemptible follies ; but they have increased with effrontery proportioned to my calmness. I have been dragged to prison, where I have remained nearly five months ; far removed from everything dear to me ; loaded with the abuse of a deluded populace, who believe that my death will be conducive to their happiness ; hearing the guards under my grated window diverting themselves with the idea of my punishment ; and reading the offensive reproaches of writers who never saw my face. Yet I have wearied no one with remonstrances. Wanting many things, I have asked for nothing ; I have hoped for justice, and an end to prejudice, from the hand of time. I have made up my mind to misfortune — proud of trying my strength with her, and trampling her under my feet. It is not, Robespierre, to excite your compassion, that I present you with a picture less melancholy than the truth. I am above asking your pity ; and were it offered, I should perhaps deem it an insult. I write for your *instruction.* Fortune is fickle ; and popular favor is liable to change. Contemplate the fate of those who have agitated, pleased, or governed the people, from Viscellinus to Cæsar, and from Hippo of Syracuse to our Parisian orators ! Justice and truth alone remain, a consolation in every misfortune, even in the hour of death ; while nothing can shelter us from the strokes of conscience. Marius and Sylla proscribed thousands of knights, senators, and wretched men. Can they stifle the voice of history, which has devoted their memories to execration ? If you wish to be just, and attend to what I write, my letter will not be useless to you, and may possibly be of ser-

vice to my country. Be that as it may, Robespierre, your conscience must tell you that a person who has known me cannot persecute me without remorse.'

This manly letter was not sent to the monster for whom it was designed, because she feared it would do no good, and only serve to exasperate a tyrant 'who might sacrifice her, but who could not degrade her.'

The two following letters were written October 18th, 1793.

'TO MY DAUGHTER.

'I do not know, my dear girl, whether I shall be allowed to see or write to you again. *Remember your mother.* In these few words is contained the best advice I can give you. You have seen me happy in fulfilling my duties, and in giving assistance to those in distress. It is the only way of being happy. You have seen me tranquil in misfortune and confinement, because I was free from remorse, and because I enjoyed the pleasing recollections, that good actions leave behind them. These are the only things that can enable us to support the evils of life, and the vicissitudes of fortune. Perhaps you are not fated, and I hope you are not, to undergo trials so severe as mine; but there are others, against which you ought to be equally on your guard. Serious and industrious habits are the best preservative against every danger; and necessity, as well as prudence, commands you to persevere diligently in your studies. Be worthy of your parents. They leave you great examples to follow; and if you are careful to avail yourself of them, your existence will not be useless to mankind. Fare-

well, my beloved child — you who drew life from my bosom, and whom I wish to impress with all my sentiments. The time will come, when you will be better able to judge of the efforts I make at this moment to repress the tender emotions excited by your dear image. I press you to my heart. Farewell, my Eudora.'

'TO MY FAITHFUL SERVANT, FLEURY.

'My dear Fleury, whose fidelity and attachment have been so grateful to me for thirteen years, receive my embraces, and my farewell. Preserve the remembrance of what I was. It will console you for what I suffer. The good pass on to glory when they descend into the grave. My sorrows are nearly ended. Think of the peace I am about to enjoy, which nobody can disturb, and do not grieve for me. Tell my poor Agatha that I carry with me to the grave the satisfaction of being beloved by her from my childhood, and the regret of not being able to give her proofs of my attachment. I could have wished to be of service to you — at least, do not let me afflict you. Farewell, my poor Fleury — farewell.'

The first of October witnessed the execution of the twenty-two deputies of the Girondins; and soon after, Madame Roland was removed to the prison of the *Conciergerie*; where she was placed in a noisome room, and compelled to sleep without sheets, upon a bed which a fellow-prisoner was good enough to lend her. Two days successively she was called before the tribunal for examination. On these occasions she exhibited her usual fearless eloquence, and unbending courage, tempered with an extreme degree of caution in all that could

implicate her husband, or friends. When asked if she had any idea where Roland was, she answered, 'I know of no law which requires me to betray the dearest sentiments of nature.' Upon which, the public accuser exclaimed that there was no end to her loquacity. She smiled serenely as she retired from the tribunal, saying, 'How I pity you! I forgive the unworthy things you have said to me. You believe me to be a great criminal, and are impatient to convict me; but how unfortunate are those who cherish such prejudices! You can send me to the scaffold; but you cannot deprive me of the satisfaction I derive from a good conscience, nor of the belief that posterity will revenge Roland and me, by consigning our persecutors to infamy. In return for the ill you mean to do me, I wish you the same peace of mind that I enjoy, whatever may be its reward.'

Being desired to choose an advocate for her trial, she named Chauveau. That night she wrote a defence,* which she intended to read before the tribunal: it is remarkable for its acuteness, eloquence, boldness and power. But alas, of what avail was reason against such men as she contended with!

The trial was a mockery. 'Madame Roland was not allowed to speak; and hired ruffians vomited forth the most atrocious calumnies before other ruffians — all the execrable tools of Robespierre. A man, who had served M. Roland about eight months, was the only one who dared to speak truth; and he was soon after sent to the scaffold to atone for the crime.' 'Madame Roland went to the place of trial with her usual firmness;

* This defence is added at the end of the volume.

but when she returned, her eyes were glistening with tears. She had been treated with so much brutality, and questions so injurious to her honor had been asked, that her grief and indignation burst forth together.'

When her advocate came to concert with her the means of defence for the ensuing day, she listened calmly, and drawing a ring from her finger, presented it to him, saying, 'Do not come to the tribunal to-morrow. It cannot save me; and it may ruin you. Accept the only token my poor gratitude can offer. To-morrow, I shall no longer exist.'

At one time she procured opium and resolved to die by her own hand; she wrote her will, and gave detailed directions concerning the education of her daughter, and the management of that small part of her fortune, which she vainly hoped the laws would protect from the power of her enemies. She wrote to the lady who protected Eudora, expressing a wish that she might be sent to the paternal estate in the country, 'there to wait for happier days; to cultivate her faculties, and prepare to meet reverses without fearing them, as well as to enjoy prosperity without being ambitious of it; according to the example of parents, who lived without reproach and would die without terror.'

While in this frame of mind, she writes thus: 'Two months ago I aspired to the honor of ascending the scaffold; for the victim was then allowed to speak, and the energy of a courageous mind might have been serviceable to the cause of truth. But why should I now expose myself to the brutal insolence of a mob too much deluded to derive any benefit from my death?'

Being summoned as a witness concerning the accusa-

tions against her political friends, she says, 'I wish to deserve death by giving in my testimony while they live; I am impatient for the summons; for I am afraid of losing the chance. This induces me to change the purpose for which all was prepared when I made my will. I will drain the bitter cup to the last drop. Truth, Friendship, my Country! Sacred objects, sentiments dear to my heart, accept my last sacrifice! My life was devoted to you, and you will render my death easy and glorious. I never feared any thing but guilt, and I will not purchase life at the expense of a base subterfuge. Woe to the times! woe to the people! among whom doing homage to disregarded truth can be attended with danger, and happy he who in such circumstances is bold enough to brave it.'

When sentence of death was pronounced against her, she said to her judges, 'You have thought me worthy to partake the fate of the great and good men, whom you have murdered; I shall try to carry to the scaffold the same courage that they have shown.'

'On the day of her execution, she was dressed neatly in white, which was chosen as a symbol of her innocence; and her long black hair fell in ringlets to her waist. After her condemnation, she passed into the prison with a quick step, that seemed like joy, and indicated to her fellow-prisoners, by an expressive gesture that she was condemned to die. Lamarche was her companion in misfortune; and his courage was not equal to her own; but on her way to the scaffold, she talked with such unaffected cheerfulness that she made him smile several times. When arrived at the place of execution, she bowed before the statue of Liberty, and utter-

ed the memorable words — '*Oh liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!*'

The following description of her is taken from Roiuffe's 'Memoirs of a Prisoner; or a History of the Tyranny of Robespierre.' Roiuffe was one of her companions in peril: 'Well aware of the fate that awaited her, her tranquillity remained undisturbed. Though past the prime of life, she was still a charming woman. She was tall, and elegantly formed. Her countenance was expressive; but misfortune and long confinement had left traces of melancholy on her face, which tempered its natural vivacity. She had the soul of a republican in a body moulded by the graces; and fashioned by a certain courtly style of elegance. There was something more than the usual feminine expression in her large dark eyes, which were soft and full of meaning. She often spoke to me at the bars with the freedom and courage of a great man. Such republican language in the mouth of a beautiful French woman, preparing for the scaffold, was a miracle of the Revolution, for which we were not prepared. We all stood listening to her with admiration and astonishment. Her conversation was serious without being cold; and she expressed herself with such a choice of words, such harmony and cadence, that the ear was never satiated with the music of her language. She spoke of her political friends with respect; but without effeminate regret, and often lamented their want of firmness. Sometimes her sex resumed the ascendency; and we saw that she had been weeping at the recollection of her husband and her child. The woman who waited on her, said to me one day, 'Before *you*, she summons all her courage; but in her

own room, she sometimes leans against the casement, and weeps for hours together.' This union of softness and fortitude rendered her the more interesting. She remained eight days at the *Conciergerie;* and in that short time rendered herself dear to all the prisoners, who sincerely deplored her fate.'

Madame Talma, wife of the celebrated actor, was confined in the prison with Madame Roland. She says, 'She behaved with great heroism on her way to the scaffold, but the evening before, she was uncommonly agitated. She spent the night in playing on the harpsichord; but the air she struck. and her manner of playing, were so strange, so shocking, and so frightful, that the sounds will never escape my memory.'

The following account published in the *Moniteur*, a paper in the service of her most violent enemies, corroborates the account of her fortitude, though it chooses to ascribe her firmness to the most unworthy motives. 'Roland's wife, — a genius for great projects, a philosopher of well-worded billets, a queen of the moment, surrounded by mercenary writers, to whom she gives suppers, distributing favors, places, and money, — was a monster in every point of view. The disdainful looks she cast upon the people, and the judges chosen by the people, the proud obstinacy of her replies, her ironical gayety, and the firmness of which she made such a parade, as she passed from the *Palais de Justice* to the *Place de la Révolution*, proved that her heart cherished no tender and affecting remembrance. Nevertheless, she was a mother; but she had sacrificed nature by her attempts to rise above it. Her desire to be considered

a talented and learned woman led her to forget the virtues appropriate to her sex; and this forgetfulness, always dangerous, finally led her to the scaffold.'

Here is a precious moral lesson from the satellites of Robespierre! men, who had neither virtue, learning, nor any other quality, that dignifies human nature — whose characters present the most disgusting and awful combination of the beasts of the earth with the spirits of the lower regions.

Madame Roland had faults, and, in some respects, her opinions are only useful in teaching us what to avoid; but it is not true that her talents led her to neglect the domestic virtues; on this subject, she thought wisely, and conducted admirably.

The Hon. A. H. Everett, in his Lecture before the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, pays the following tribute to the memory of Madame Roland:—

'But the most interesting person among the Girondins, and the one who may perhaps be considered the leader of the party, was the celebrated Madame Roland. Though educated under circumstances not favorable to improvement, she had by the mere force of her own talent, placed herself on a level, in point of information and extent of views, with the highest minds of her own, or any other time. She co-operated actively with her husband in the discharge of the duties of his department, and although she shared, in no small degree, the exaggerations and delusions of the period, she nevertheless exhibited a sounder sense, and a more resolute humanity than any of her political associates. She made the strongest effort in particular to prevent her

friends from being carried away by the more violent party, into a co-operation with the measures that led to the trial and condemnation of the unfortunate king. She wrote with an eloquence and manly vigor, which would have done honor to the best authors in the language.'

The London Critical Review says, 'As a woman, Madame Roland must be admired for her fancy, her abilities, her fidelity, and her magnanimity in suffering. She was, however, far from being exempt from the most common failings of her sex or nation. In any country but her own, in any situation but that of a proscribed and persecuted woman, she would have made a distinguished figure in life; for she was ambitious of distinction, and her abilities offered the only justification of which ambition is capable. The objections to her character are common to her with most of the French writers and politicians of that period. They are philosophers without wisdom, and moralists without religion. They form theories which promise the duration of ages; but their practice is the immediate feeling of the moment.'

Madame Roland was executed on the 8th of November, 1793, just as she was entering her fortieth year. The sentence of condemnation was thus worded: 'The public accuser has drawn up the present indictment against Manon-Jeanne Phlipon, the wife of Roland, heretofore minister of the interior, for having wickedly, and designedly, aided and assisted in the conspiracy which existed against the unity and indivisibility of the republic, against the liberty and safety of the French people, by assembling at her house, in secret council, the prin-

cipal chiefs of that conspiracy, and by keeping up a correspondence tending to facilitate their liberticide designs. The tribunal, having heard the public accuser deliver his reasons concerning the application of the law, condemns Manon-Jeanne Phlipon, wife of Roland, to the punishment of death.'

Madame Roland had often said her husband would not long survive her. The news of her death at first deprived him of his senses; which only returned to make him feel more acutely the extremity of anguish and despair. At first he resolved to go to Paris, to brave the fury of the Convention by uttering a few bold truths, and then follow her he had so much loved to the scaffold. But as his public condemnation would involve the confiscation of all his property, he hoped to save his daughter from poverty by committing suicide. On the 15th of November he left his retreat, being resolved not to bring ruin on his benefactors by betraying their generosity. Having wandered several leagues toward Paris, he stopped, leaned against a tree, and stabbed himself with a sword, which he had carried in his cane. In his pocket was this letter: 'Whoever you may be, that find me in my last repose, respect my remains! They are those of a man who consecrated his whole life to usefulness, and who has died as he lived, virtuous and honest. May my fellow-citizens learn to entertain more humane and gentle sentiments; the blood which is flowing in torrents in my country dictates this advice: these massacres can only be instigated by the most cruel enemies of France. Indignation, not fear, induced me to quit my retreat. When I heard the fate of my wife, I

no longer wished to live in a world so polluted with crime!'

His request was not complied with; the rage of party spirit heaped the most insulting indignities upon his corpse. His fortune was confiscated to the nation.

In 1795 Madame Roland's memoirs, accompanied by some detached notes and historic sketches, were published by M. Bosc, for the benefit of her orphan, under the title of An Appeal to Impartial Posterity; in two octavo volumes. In 1800 her works were all published, by her friend Champagneux, in three volumes; consisting of the Appeal to Posterity; works of Leisure Hours, and various Reflections; A Journey to Souci, and Travels in England and Switzerland.

It is a little remarkable that two women so much distinguished as Madame de Staël and Madame Roland should not have made the slightest allusion to each other in their writings. Madame Roland was twelve years older than her celebrated cotemporary, and died before she obtained very extensive fame; this may naturally enough account for her silence. But though their different rank in society would prevent them from being personally known to each other, Madame de Staël must have *heard* of Madame Roland—she must have known how eloquently she wrote, and how courageously she suffered. Perhaps, amid the confused accounts and wilful misrepresentations of that period she might have been led to confound the sincere but sometimes wild enthusiast, with the reckless and violent advocates of uproar and carnage. Madame de Staël being much admired and flattered by the higher circles of society, naturally detested the spirit which led the Jacobins to persecute

the aristocracy, and to condemn thousands to death for the mere accident of their birth and fortune: Madame Roland, from her different location, viewed society in a totally dissimilar light; she seldom met any of the aristocracy without having her feelings wounded, or her pride insulted, by their arrogant pretensions; hence her strongest and deepest prejudices were all arrayed against them. For opposite reasons, perhaps these ladies were alike incapable of judging fairly of the existing evils in society, or of forming an impartial opinion of each other's merits.

A stronger reason for Madame de Staël's silence, than mere party prejudice, may be found in the fact that Madame Roland spoke very contemptuously of M. Necker's talents, integrity, and patriotism: she describes him, as a man of moderate abilities, of whom the world had a good opinion, because he had a great opinion of himself, and loudly proclaimed it; a financier, who knew only how to calculate the contents of a purse, and who was always talking about his character, as profligate women talk of their virtue.'*

Both Madame de Staël and Madame Roland are so much connected with political history, that the estimation in which they are held is still a matter of party spirit. Probably no advocates of Robespierre's misrule now exist to blacken the character of Madame Roland; but the advocates of kings and nobles are very unwilling to allow that she had any merit, or deserves any applause.

* All who liked a constitutional monarchy, or were early desirous of placing some limit to popular usurpation, were regarded by Madame Roland, in the warmth of her zeal, as cold and selfish; her censure and distrust fell upon La Fayette as well as upon M. Necker.

The ultra-royalists are not very partial to Madame de Staël, because she wished to see the power of the monarch restrained by a constitution; and as she disliked jacobinism quite as much as she did tyranny, she pleased neither party, and was accused by both: in addition to this, the Bonapartists are quite willing to magnify all the imperfections of a woman, whose very biography must cast a blot on the character of their hero; they aver that she could not have been a true friend to freedom, because she was the enemy of him who styled himself 'the people's king' and 'the *pacificator* of Europe.'

Madame de Staël's appeal in favor of the Queen, and her sympathy with the proscribed nobility, among whom were some of her most intimate friends, has been brought forward as a proof that she was not sincere in her professed love of liberty. I do not pretend to judge of the correctness of her political tendencies, — for those who know more than myself might well hesitate to declare what form of government would have been best for France, at that distracted period, — but I am sure that no true republican will like her less for her ready and active compassion: For myself, I care little whether she had the wisdom of statesmen in her head, so long as she had the kindness of woman in her heart.

I respect and admire almost every point in Madame Roland's character. I love her for preferring the beauties of nature, and the quiet happiness of domestic life, to all the glittering excitements of society; I revere the strictness of her moral principles, the purity of her intentions, and the perfect rectitude of her conduct; I admire the vigorous activity of her mind, her unyielding fortitude, and her uniform regard for truth. I warmly

sympathize with her enthusiasm for liberty, her hatred of oppression, and her contempt for the insolence of rank — But I confess I am sometimes startled by the fierceness and boldness of her expressions. I would have had her more compassionate toward that class of people, whose haughty condescension so well deserved her cold contempt. After all, iron-hearted consistency is a quality difficult to admire in woman.

I might enlarge upon some other points, which qualify my respect for Madame Roland ; but I deem it more useful to ourselves, as well as more charitable to others, to dwell upon virtues to be imitated, rather than upon errors to be avoided. The times in which she lived were unnatural — theories were corrupt — salutary restraints broken down — religion cast away as an idle toy fit only for the superannuated — the whole system of things was diseased. — At such a crisis, how could *perfect* examples be expected ?

I have endeavored to be an impartial biographer both to Madame de Staël and Madame Roland. In many respects, Madame de Staël reminds me of the highly gifted Athenian, — fascinating Pericles by her wit and eloquence — discoursing philosophy with Plato — inspired with genius — unable to live without the dangerous excitement of admiration — enjoying triumph — and very vain of her power.

The latter presents herself to my mind under the image of a blooming Spartan damsel, — strong, active, and fearless—ambitious of sharing difficult and dangerous enterprises — fearing death less than she scorned effeminacy — and boldly contending for the prize amid the warriors in the gymnasium.

DRAUGHT OF A DEFENCE,

BY MADAME ROLAND,

INTENDED TO BE READ TO THE TRIBUNAL.*

The charge brought against me rests entirely upon the pretended fact of my being the accomplice of men called conspirators. My intimacy with a few of them is of much older date than the political circumstances, in consequence of which they are now considered as rebels; and the correspondence we kept up through the medium of our common friends, at the time of their departure from Paris, was entirely foreign to public affairs. Properly speaking, I have been engaged in no political correspondence whatever, and in that respect I might confine myself to a simple denial; for I certainly cannot be called upon to give an account of my particular affections. But I have a right to be proud of them, as well as of my conduct, nor do I wish to conceal anything from the public eye. I shall therefore acknowledge, that, with expressions of regret at my confinement, I received an intimation that Duperret had two letters for me, whether written by one or by two of my friends,

* Written at the *Conciergerie* the night after her examination.

before or after their leaving Paris, I cannot say. Duperret had delivered them into other hands, and they never came to mine. Another time I received a pressing invitation to break my chains, and an offer of services, to assist me in effecting my escape, in any way I might think proper, and to convey me whithersoever I might afterwards wish to go. I was dissuaded from listening to such proposals by duty and by honor; by duty, that I might not endanger the safety of those to whose care I was confided; and by honor, because at all events I preferred running the risk of an unjust trial, to exposing myself to the suspicion of guilt, by a flight unworthy of me. When I consented to be taken up on the 31st of May, it was not with the intention of afterwards making my escape. In that alone consists all my correspondence with my fugitive friends. No doubt, if all means of communication had not been cut off, or if I had not been prevented by confinement, I should have endeavored to learn what was become of them; for I know of no law by which my doing so is forbidden. In what age, or in what nation, was it ever considered a crime to be faithful to those sentiments of esteem and brotherly affection, which bind man to man? I do not pretend to judge of the measures of those who have been proscribed: they are unknown to me; but I will never believe in the evil intentions of men, of whose probity, civism, and devotion to their country I am thoroughly convinced. If they erred, it was unwittingly; they fall without being abased; and I regard them as unfortunate, without being liable to blame. I am perfectly easy as to their glory, and willingly consent to participate in the honor of being oppressed by their enemies.

I know those men, accused of conspiring against their country, to have been determined republicans, but humane, and persuaded that good laws were necessary to procure the republic the good-will of persons who doubted whether it could be maintained ; which, it must be confessed, is more difficult than to kill them. The history of every age proves, that it requires great talents to lead men to virtue by wise institutions, while force suffices to oppress them by terror, or to annihilate them by death. I have heard them assert, that abundance, as well as happiness, can only proceed from an equitable, protecting, and beneficent government ; and that the omnipotence of the bayonet may produce fear, but not bread. I have seen them animated by the most lively enthusiasm for the good of the people, disdaining to flatter them, and resolved rather to fall victims to their delusion, than be the means of keeping it up. I confess these principles, and this conduct, appeared to me totally different from the sentiments and proceedings of tyrants, or ambitious men, who seek to please the people to effect their subjugation. It inspired me with the highest esteem for those generous men : this error, if an error it be, will accompany me to the grave, whither I shall be proud of following those, whom I was not permitted to accompany.

My defence, I will venture to say, is more necessary to those, who really wish to come at the truth, than it is to myself. Calm and contented in the consciousness of having done my duty, I look forward to futurity with perfect peace of mind. My serious turn, and studious habits, have preserved me alike from the follies of dissipation, and from the bustle of intrigue. A friend to

liberty, on which reflection had taught me to set a just value, I beheld the revolution with delight, persuaded it was destined to put an end to the arbitrary power I detested, and to the abuses I had so often lamented, when reflecting with pity upon the fate of the indigent classes of society. I took an interest in the progress of the revolution, and spoke with warmth of public affairs: but I did not pass the bounds prescribed by my sex. Some small talents, a considerable share of philosophy, a degree of courage more uncommon, and which did not permit me to weaken my husband's energy in dangerous times: such perhaps are the qualities, which those who know me may have indiscreetly extolled, and which may have made me enemies among those to whom I am unknown. Roland sometimes employed me as a secretary; and the famous letter to the king, for instance, is copied entirely in my hand-writing. This would be an excellent item to add to my indictment, if the *Austrians* were trying me, and if they should have thought fit to extend a minister's responsibility to his wife. But Roland long ago manifested his knowledge, and his attachment to the great principles of politics: the proofs of them exist in his numerous works, published during the last fifteen years. — His learning and his probity are all his own; nor did he stand in need of a wife to make him an able minister. Never were conferences or secret councils held at his house; his colleagues, whoever they might be, and a few friends and acquaintance, met once a week at his table, and there conversed, in a public manner, on matters in which everybody was concerned. As to the rest, the writings of that minister, which breathe throughout a love of or-

der and of peace, and which lay down in the most forcible manner the best principles of morality and politics, will forever attest his wisdom, as his accounts will prove his integrity.

To return to the offence imputed to me, I have to observe that I never was intimate with Duperret. I saw him now and then at the time of Roland's administration; but he never came to our house during the six months that my husband was no longer in office. The same remark will apply to the other members, our friends, which surely does not accord with the plots and conspiracies laid to our charge. It is evident by my first letter to Duperret, I only wrote to him because I knew not to whom else to address myself, and because I imagined he would readily consent to oblige me. My correspondence with him could not then be concerted; it could not be the consequence of any previous intimacy, and could have only one object in view. It gave me afterwards an opportunity of receiving accounts from those who had just absented themselves, and with whom I was connected by the ties of friendship, independently of all political considerations. The latter were totally out of the question in the kind of correspondence I kept up with them during the early part of their absence. No written memorial bears witness against me in that respect; those adduced only leading to a belief that I partook of the opinions and sentiments of the persons called conspirators. This deduction is well founded: I confess it without reserve, and am proud of the conformity. But I never manifested my opinions in a way which can be construed into a crime, or which tended to occasion any disturbance. Now, to become an ac-

complice in any plan whatever, it is necessary to give advice, or to furnish means of execution. I have done neither ; I am not then reprehensible in the eye of the law — there is no law to condemn me, nor any fact which admits of the application of a law.

I know that, in revolutions, law, as well as justice, is often forgotten ; and the proof of it is, that I am here. I owe my trial to nothing but the prejudices, and violent animosities, which arise in times of great agitation, and which are generally directed against those who have been placed in conspicuous situations, or are known to possess any energy or spirit. It would have been easy for my courage to put me out of the reach of the sentence I foresaw ; but I thought it rather became me to undergo it ; I thought that I owed the example to my country ; I thought that if I were to be condemned, it must be right to leave tyranny all the odium of sacrificing a woman, whose crime is that of possessing some small talent, which she never misapplied, a zealous desire of the welfare of mankind, and courage enough to acknowledge her unfortunate friends, and to do homage to virtue at the risk of her life. Minds, which have any claim to greatness, are capable of divesting themselves of selfish considerations ; they feel they belong to the whole human race ; and their views are directed to posterity alone. I am the wife of a virtuous man, exposed to persecution ; and I was the friend of men, who have been proscribed and immolated by delusion, and the hatred of jealous mediocrity. It is necessary that I should perish in my turn, because it is a rule with tyranny to sacrifice those whom it has grievously oppressed, and to annihilate the very witnesses of its misdeeds. I have

this double claim to death from your hands, and I expect it. When innocence walks to the scaffold, at the command of error and perversity, every step she takes is an advance towards glory. May I be the last victim sacrificed to the furious spirit of party! I shall quit with joy this unfortunate earth, which swallows up the friends of virtue, and drinks the blood of the just.

Truth! friendship! my country! sacred objects, sentiments dear to my heart, accept my last sacrifice. My life was devoted to you, and you will render my death easy and glorious.

Just heaven! enlighten this unfortunate people, for whom I desired liberty. . . . . Liberty!—It is for noble minds, who despise death, and who know how, upon occasion, to give it to themselves. It is not for weak beings, who enter into a composition with guilt, and cover selfishness and cowardice with the name of prudence. It is not for corrupt wretches, who rise from the bed of debauchery, or from the mire of indigence, to feast their eyes on the blood that streams from the scaffold. It is the portion of a people, who delight in humanity, practise justice, despise their flatterers, and respect the truth. While you are not such a people, O my fellow-cittzens! you will talk in vain of liberty: instead of liberty, you will have licentiousness, of which you will all fall victims in your turns; you will ask for bread; dead bodies will be given you; and you will at last bow down your necks to the yoke.

I have neither concealed my sentiments nor my opinions. I know that a Roman lady was sent to the scaffold for lamenting the death of her son. I know that, in times of delusion and party rage, he who dares avow

himself the friend of the condemned, or of the proscribed, exposes himself to their fate. But I despise death; I never feared anything but guilt, and I will not purchase life at the expense of a base subterfuge. Woe to the times! woe to the people among whom doing homage to disregarded truth can be attended with danger,—and happy he, who in such circumstancs is bold enough to brave it!

It is now your part to see whether it answer your purpose to condemn me without proof, upon mere matter of opinion, and without the support or justification of any law.

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